

1984

Student perceptions of the learning environment under a quarter system at two community colleges

Lyla S. Maynard
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STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT UNDER A
QUARTER SYSTEM AT TWO COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Iowa State University

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Student perceptions of the learning environment
under a quarter system at two community colleges

by

Lyla S. Maynard

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
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CHAPTER 1--THE PROBLEM

Academic calendars are modes of delivery systems at colleges and universities in America. They are generally identified in terms of quarter, semester, or trimester systems. The academic calendar that is used by an institution will likely be one that is approved by the faculty, adopted by the governing board, and designed to meet the needs of students and the academic community. Historically, the colleges and universities in the United States have utilized the semester system for the delivery of academic courses following a pattern set in colonial times (Jencks and Riesman, 1977).

It may be argued that no one academic calendar is good for every institution (Larsson, 1979). However, the semester system is the most common delivery system. In a national study of academic calendars (N=3130), the San Joaquin Delta College AdHoc Committee (1981) found 57% of the two-year arts and science colleges, professional/technical, and four-year liberal arts, professional/technical colleges and universities utilizing the semester system. The study reported 24% were on a quarter system and 19% were on some other type of academic calendar (trimester or a combination of academic calendars).

The state of Iowa has a system of fifteen area community colleges which serve merged multi-county areas. The 61st General Assembly in 1965 approved legislation (Senate File 550 which became Chapter 280A, Code of Iowa) permitting the development of a state wide system of post-secondary educational institutions operated under the direction of the

State Board of Public Instruction (Department of Public Instruction, 1980).

The merged areas were authorized to develop area schools as either area community colleges or area vocational schools. The General Assembly identified the following categories as appropriate educational opportunities and services to be provided by the area schools:

1. The first two years of college work including preprofessional education (This does not apply to those merged areas that organized as area vocational schools.)
2. Vocational and technical training
3. Programs for in-service training and retraining of workers
4. Programs for high school completion for students of post-high school age
5. Programs for all students of high school age who may best serve themselves by enrolling for technical or vocational training
6. Student personnel services
7. Community services
8. Vocational education for persons who have academic, socio-economic, or other handicaps which prevent their succeeding in regular vocational educational programs
9. Vocational and technical training for persons who are not enrolled in a high school and who have not completed high school (Department of Public Instruction, 1980)

The law also mandated a quarter academic calendar (four 12 week sessions) for all those area schools which organized as area vocational schools. Ten of the area schools chose to organize as area vocational schools, five did not. Recently, the language of the mandate was changed to read:

The length of the school year of the area school shall provide for the effective use of the physical plant and include a minimum of 48 weeks of operation. The school year may consist of: Two semester terms and one summer term, or four quarter terms. An area school may use any one or more of the three school years identified above or may offer instruction in units of length keyed to the identified scope and depth of the instructional content (Department of Public Instruction, 1982).

Given additional flexibility to the academic calendar by the wording of the mandate, two community colleges, Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) and Southeastern Community College (SCC), initiated plans for restructuring their current calendar. Both colleges made plans to convert to a semester academic system in the fall of 1983.

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of the students of the learning environment at DMACC and SCC as those institutions converted from a quarter to a semester system. In addition, this study will become a companion study to quarter/semester transition research being conducted at Iowa State University.

Des Moines Area Community College

Des Moines Area Community College (merged Area XI) includes all or major portions of Audubon, Boone, Carroll, Dallas, Guthrie, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Polk, Story, and Warren Counties. Currently, four campuses are located in Area XI: the main campus is located in Ankeny,

Iowa with additional campus sites at Boone, Carroll, and Des Moines, Iowa. At the time of the organization of merged Area XI one post-high (exluding Iowa State University at Ames) school was located in the area: Boone Junior College which was operated by the local school district. The voters of the district voted to merge Boone Junior College into a part of DMACC effective July 1, 1967 (Bengston, 1983).

Des Moines Area Community College is the largest of all merged community colleges in Iowa serving a land area (6560 sq. miles) that occupies 11% of the total land mass in the state of Iowa. Five hundred ninety thousand and fifty-seven persons reside in the district which constitutes 20% of the state's population. Current enrollment at DMACC is 7,635 full or part-time students with 57% of those students coming from the metropolitan Des Moines Area (McClurg, 1983).

When DMACC was organized, the Board of Directors voted to initiate a quarter academic calendar in accordance with the mandated law. Their decision was also influenced by the fact that ISU was on the quarter system. Many of the students from DMACC who transferred to four-year institutions chose ISU because of its geographic closeness. During the past five years, 1322 students have transferred from DMACC to ISU. The figures broken down are:

Fall, 1982	322 students
Fall, 1981	268 students
Fall, 1980	258 students
Fall, 1979	248 students
Fall, 1978	236 students (Giest, 1983)

Southeastern Community College

Southeastern Community College serves the southeastern corner of the state known as merged Area XVI. The area is bounded on the east by the Mississippi River, on the south by the Iowa-Missouri border and includes all of Des Moines, Henry, and Lee Counties and parts of Louisa and Washington Counties. Two public post-high school institutions were located in the existing area: Burlington Community College and Keokuk Community College. Both of the educational institutions operated as junior colleges by their local school districts before Chapter 280A became a law. On July 1, 1967, the two institutions became Southeastern Community College. In 1968, as a part of the expanding educational facilities, a campus was formed at the Iowa State Penitentiary at Fort Madison, Iowa (Hierstein, 1983).

The area in Southeastern Iowa is made up of small towns and has a population of 114,290. The area (1,623 sq. miles) is primarily rural. Because of the nature of the area, the majority of the students have an agricultural background.

Prior to the merger into a community college, Keokuk Community College and Burlington Community College were on the semester system. The Southeastern Community College Career Education Program (SCCCEP) was mandated by state law to be on the quarter system. When the state mandated that SCCEP be on a quarter system, a uniform quarter academic system for all campuses was established in 1972.

Mission

Although the primary responsibility for learning is the individual's, both schools recognize the importance of facilitating the student's learning and developing their maximum potential. Des Moines Area Community College and Southeastern Community College strive to provide a comprehensive educational environment.

The mission at both DMACC and SCC is to offer quality educational programs and courses to meet diverse community interests and needs within the context of the state mandate. Part of the mission is designed to enhance the abilities and personal objectives of individuals from varying backgrounds. Another important part of the mission of DMACC and SCC is to improve the quality of life, economic conditions, and the public welfare of the state of Iowa (see Appendix A & B for goal statements for each institution).

Des Moines Area Community College and Southeastern Community College offer a wide range of programs in vocational (career) education and liberal arts. The courses taken in the liberal arts or college transfer program may be transferred to four-year institutions. Since all regent's institutions and many of the private colleges were on the semester academic delivery system, articulation may have become more of a problem if the community colleges remained on the quarter academic delivery system.

Transition

Des Moines Area Community College and Southeastern Community College each approached the period of transition. Because of this, the plans for the conversion will be reported individually.

Southeastern Community College transition

The change in the mandate concerning area schools coupled with the fact that all of the four-year educational institutions in the immediate region were on the semester system prompted Dr. Carlton Callison, superintendent/president to initiate plans for moving toward the semester system at SCC (Callison, 1983). Several committees were established to consider all aspects of this conversion. They were:

1. The Action Structure Committee which developed and implemented a survey instrument to be used in collecting a sampling of term preference from the faculty (all), students (day, evening, noncredit, and transfer), and the Administrative Council (see Appendix C).
2. The Systems Analysis Committee which developed a list of advantages and disadvantages of the semester and quarter systems.
3. The Economic Impact Committee which attempted to predict the economic advantages (if any) of the semester system.
4. The Time Schedule Committee which developed a schedule of deadline dates for various steps necessary for a change from the quarter to the semester systems.

The Committees summarized their findings in one report to Dr. Callison early in 1980. The following reasons were cited in the report as disadvantages to the quarter system:

1. Excessive energy costs in terms of heating and cooling the physical facilities. Also, all of the students, faculty, and staff commute; as the cost of automotive fuel increased travel expenses increased.
2. Excessive length of school year when compared to nearby educational institutions. Southeastern Community College students were still in session while surrounding schools had dismissed for the school year, which made it difficult for SCC students to secure summer employment.
3. Excessive expenditures of time, money, and effort for student registration, final examinations, grade reporting and student program planning.
4. Excessive demands on the 12-month calendar. The calendar consisted of: 36 weeks in a regular academic year, a 10-week summer session, 2 weeks Christmas vacation, 15 holidays, and 1 week of student registration.
5. Increased articulation problems occurred when transferring quarter hours to an institution on a semester system. Three quarter hours would equate to two semester hours; four quarter hours would equate to two and two-thirds semester hours; five quarter hours would equate to three and one-third semester hours.
6. Increased pressure to find time to make-up lost class periods due to emergencies, i.e. weather. No "extra" days were included in the quarter system to make-up a missed day.

As a part of the final report, the Committee recommended SCC convert to the semester system as this would:

1. Provide an educational delivery system which was educationally sound.
2. Provide an educational delivery system which would be economically advantageous to both the students and the institution.
3. Provide the delivery system to the college without additional cost yet in a manner that resulted in equitable treatment of the entire staff and student body.
4. Provide a delivery system in such a manner to alleviate or eliminate as many of the previously listed concerns as possible.

On March 8, 1982, the Board of Directors at SCC gave unanimous approval to the proposal to convert to the semester calendar and directed the Administration to move forward with implementation of the semester calendar in the fall of 1983 (Callison, 1983).

Des Moines Area Community College transition

In the fall of 1981, a new executive officer was selected for DMACC. Under the leadership of Dr. Joseph Borgen, the school has undergone extensive reorganization. Included among the reorganization plans was a review of the academic calendar. After discussion by the President's Cabinet early in Spring 1982, Dr. Borgen presented to the Board of Directors a proposal that recommended the college convert from a quarter academic calendar to a semester academic calendar effective September, 1983. He presented the following as a basis for his decision:

1. Better articulation. More than 20% of the incoming students (approximately 1300 per year) have attended another college before enrolling at DMACC. The majority of the private schools and all of the Regent's institutions in Iowa are on the semester system.
2. Registration savings. The registration workload would be decreased by 25%. Instead of having four registrations there would be only three. Those employees now spending the majority of their time in registration would be better utilized under a semester plan. There would be some monetary savings as fewer part-time employees would be necessary for semester registration.
3. Publication savings. By reducing the schedule publication needs from four to three, the school should realize a cost benefit.
4. Promotion savings. Instead of promoting the classes each quarter, the school would save promotion dollars and college relations staff time by promoting with general advertising three times a year.
5. Cross enrollment. The unique cross enrollment cooperative agreement with Drake University and Grandview College would

- be enhanced. Both of those institutions were on semesters, thus students would be better served.
6. Telecourses. Telecourses were all designed for the semester system.
 7. Book orders. Time spent coordinating textbook needs with student and class needs via the bookstore would be reduced by one-fourth.
 8. General time-talent advantages. The proposed calendar would provide proportionately more time to faculty for class development, rethinking courses, student evaluation, and student support.
 9. Space utilization. While going through the necessary process of revising the curriculum from quarters to semesters, there would be a chance to review the curricula to fulfill the needs of more students. By using more time options other than those utilized in the past, the space would be used more effectively.
 10. Revitalization of programs. With the semester system, the advisory committee members and faculty would be able to integrate new and fresh ideas concerning the curriculum. This gives students the benefit of modern concepts and up-to-date marketplace needs.
 11. Improved accessibility. After converting from quarters to semesters, there would be more flexibility with regard to course offerings and time scheduling. This would enable the college to meet a wider variety of student needs.
 12. Increased flexibility. By reducing the number of schedules, promotions, book orders, registration, time required to keep records, etc., the college could reallocate valuable staff time to conduct follow-up studies, student research to respond to the marketplace, and to explore new concepts (Borgen, 1982).

The Board of Directors at DMACC approved the recommendation by the President's Cabinet and the transition period began. Because the faculty had no active role in this decision, meetings were held in each division at DMACC to inform faculty and staff of the Board's decision to be on the semester system fall of 1983.

At both DMACC and SCC during the transition period, deliberations, and planning for the semester system, the concerns of the students were noted and efforts to minimize those concerns were undertaken. The schools held several information sessions so students would have an

opportunity to ask questions about the transition process and the semester system.

Statement of the problem

This research problem was designed to determine student perception of the learning environment under the quarter system at DMACC and SCC. The research project specifically measured factors relating to perception of the learning environment, grade point average, student organizational involvement, social involvement, and articulation to four-year institutions in relation to the conversion from a quarter system to a semester system. There may be significant differences between the students at DMACC and SCC. Therefore, part of this study seeks to measure any significant differences between two groups of students in their perception of the learning environment.

The study will also attempt to determine if any significant differences existed between Arts and Science and Vocational (Career) Education students in their perceptions of the learning environment:

The specific hypotheses to be tested are:

1. Students will perceive no significant difference of the learning environment under a semester system as compared to the present quarter system.
2. Students will perceive no significant difference in grade point average under a semester system as compared to the present quarter system.
3. Students will perceive no significant difference in transferring to a four-year institution under a semester

system as compared to the present quarter system.

4. When DMACC students are compared to SCC students, the perceptions of the learning environment under a semester system as compared to the present quarter system will not be significantly different.
5. When DMACC students are compared to SCC students, the perception of their grade point average under a semester system as compared to the present quarter system will not be significantly different.
6. When DMACC students are compared to SCC students, perceptions of transferring to four-year institutions under a semester system as compared to the present quarter system will not be significantly different.

The results of this study will provide DMACC and SCC with data concerning student perceptions of the learning environment under the semester system. As the institutions refine their practices, policies, and procedures, under the semester system, the information gathered can be of use in determining which areas of the learning environment need attention. Also, the information may provide some guidelines for similar institutions who may be considering an academic calendar change.

Definitions

For purposes of this study, the following definitions were used:

- Learning environment. Moore's (1982) definition will be used.

Learning environment is "the interaction among institutional characteristics, human relationships and campus events as they

affect the process of learning."

- Quarter academic system. The academic calendar which is divided into three 12 week quarters and one 10-week summer session during the academic year.
- Trimester academic system. The academic calendar which is divided into three 15-week sessions, one session is usually divided into an 8-week first summer session and a 7-week second summer session.
- Semester academic system. Two academic sessions which are usually 15-18 weeks in length with a 6-week session in the summer.
- Arts and Science student. A student who is enrolled in an academic program within the Arts and Sciences division such as: natural sciences, social sciences, communications, and/or humanities. These students generally transfer to four-year institutions to complete a baccalaureate degree.
- Vocational (Career) Education student. A student who is enrolled in an academic program such as: Auto Mechanics, Diesel Mechanics, Heavy Equipment Operator, Tool and Die, Building Trades, High Technology, Telecommunications, Agri-Business, Fashion Merchandising, Office Education, Dental Hygiene, Dental Assistant, and Child Care. These students generally go directly into their occupational field upon completion of their programs without pursuing a baccalaureate degree.

Limitations of the study

The data to be analyzed were gathered from two community colleges in Iowa. Conclusions from this study are not transferable to other community colleges in other parts of the United States.

The respondents at the two community colleges were from both rural and urban geographic areas. Therefore, they may not be representative of community colleges whose students were predominantly rural or urban.

Eight of the programs that were randomly selected for this study were programs in which the students typically do not articulate to four-year institutions. Those programs included: Dental Hygiene, Dental Assistant, Diesel Mechanics, General Office Clerk, Nursing Associate, Auto Mechanics, Welding, and Heavy Equipment Operator. Therefore, those students' responses may influence data with regard to articulation to four-year institutions.

The respondents were all first year students whose ages ranged from 18 to 50+ years. No method of determining the traditional (18-22 years) college age student was utilized. Therefore, no specific determination or generalization could be made to selected age cohorts.

CHAPTER 2--REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of the literature indicated that few studies had addressed student perceptions of the learning environment. There was existing literature which specifically pertained to assessing the college environment, however, the researcher was unable to find literature on student perceptions of the learning environment under a specific academic calendar.

In this chapter, research on the effects of a change in the academic delivery system will be examined. Also included will be a review of some of the existing perceptual assessment instruments used to determine student perceptions of an institutional environment and how this definition related to the community college. The topical areas include a review of environmental factors, and a review of the literature describing the effects of grade point average, level of student organizational involvement, social involvement, and ease of articulation to four-year institutions in relation to the conversion from one academic delivery system to another.

Review of existing perceptual instruments

Several perceptual instruments were reviewed by the researcher, her graduate committee, personnel at DMACC and SCC, and RISE. Those instruments were: the College Characteristics Index (CCI), College and University Environment Scales (CUES), College Student Questionnaire (CSQ), College Student Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSSQ), Institutional

Goals Inventory (IGI), the Student Reaction to College Questionnaire, and the RISE Quarter/Semester Transition Instrument.

Pace and Stern (1958) attempted to implement the ideas of Harvard psychologist Henry Murray about the personality "needs" of an individual and the "presses"--the rewards, constraints, and emphases of the environment as perceived by the individual--that influence the individual's behavior into a perceptual measure. They designed the College Characteristics Index (CCI) which attempted to improve the prediction of academic performance by studying the student-college "fit".

Pace (1969) then developed the College and University Environment Scales (CUES) which consisted of items from the CCI, and items on five dimensions of campus life: Practicality, Community, Awareness, Propriety, and Scholarship. The CUES uses the collective perceptions of students on the five dimensions to characterize the institutional environment.

The CUES has been used frequently to study differences not only among colleges but also between fraternities, sororities, and different classes (such as freshmen and senior) (Feldman and Newcomb, 1969). The CUES has been used to measure the perceptions of new versus experienced students about a university environment (Reiner and Robinson, 1970).

The College Student Questionnaire (CSQ) designed by Peterson (1965) is a two-part instrument to assess student characteristics and student satisfaction with their chosen college. Another instrument used for measuring student satisfaction with academic and interpersonal aspects

of college life is the College Student Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSSQ) developed by Starr, Betz, Menne (1971).

Instruments have been designed to be used at selected colleges. Warren and Roelfs (1972) developed the Student Reaction to College Questionnaire for two-year colleges. The purpose of this survey was to identify institutional strengths and weaknesses according to the students. The Institutional Goals Inventory (IGI) allowed an institution to describe the degree of consensus among campus groups about the institutional goals (Peterson and Uhl, 1975). They used an "ideal" and "real" response comparison to determine an institution's goals. Other perceptual measures have been developed for general institutional use (Moos and Gerst, 1974) (Peterson and Uhl, 1975).

After examining several instruments, it was felt these instruments would not adequately measure the perceptions of the calendar change on the learning environment. Consequently, the instrument that appeared to be most adaptable to the purpose of this study was the instrument used at Iowa State University by Moore (1982).

Environmental factors

To restructure a college calendar is a major decision for any institution since it involves a variety of administrative, psychological, and social factors. If, for example, an institution was considering converting from quarters to semesters, the change could result in less administrative requirements in terms of registration, finals, processing of grades, and bookkeeping. Educationally and psychologically students may have more time to study and more time for

research. Professors may have more time to become familiar with students and they would be able to spend more time with students on student projects (Shepard, 1982).

President Shriver (1977) of Miami University reported students experienced less pressure, fewer exams, increased study, improved interpersonal relations, and better summer employment opportunities after Miami University converted to an early semester academic calendar. The concerns of the students centered around fewer course offerings which resulted in fewer opportunities to take courses outside of a chosen major.

Minority students in the junior class reported the greatest amount of stress during the time Colorado State University converted to the early semester system (Madrado-Peterson and Rodriguez, 1978). Under the quarter system, students have the opportunity to take more courses throughout the college experience (Sisson and Arthur, 1973). The quarter system also permitted a flexible time schedule with regard to taking required courses, and the time spent in less favored courses is limited (Shepard, 1982).

Ocean County College, a two-year medium-sized college in New Jersey, conducted a survey on all the students who were enrolled in English classes (N=345) to determine their preference in regard to the academic delivery system. Parrish and Pascale (1978) reported that 46% of the students favored the current traditional semester system; 47% preferred either quarter or trimester system; 17% favored shortening the winter semester. Reasons given for instituting a change included

flexible time schedule, availability of more course offerings, and less stress encountered when taking nonfavored subjects. Chabot College, created in 1961, started on the semester system and in 1966 converted to the quarter system. Mertes (1975) conducted a survey in 1975 to determine whether or not Chabot should return to the semester system. Questionnaires were distributed to the faculty and students to determine their preference. She reported that 88% of the responding students favored the quarter system; whereas 52% of the responding faculty preferred the semester system. The students indicated that the quarter system was better because courses were more "straightforward." Also, Christmas recess would improve since courses had ended; an opportunity would exist for a larger variety of courses and faculty exposure; and a student could start over with greater ease if they had to withdraw. The students also mentioned the opportunity would be available to change majors without a great loss of time; and there would be a greater likelihood of finishing a course since the work did not stretch out so long. Faculty members looked on the quarter system as too demanding on both faculty and students. They felt students needed more time to learn and that time would be gained under a semester system.

An intensive evaluation of the quarter system versus the semester system was conducted through student and faculty evaluation at Western Wisconsin Technical Institute (1974). A part of the study included an analysis of the effects of the quarter system on other schools, agencies, businesses, and industries. The majority of the respondents including students, faculty, other schools, business, and industry

preferred the quarter system over the semester system. Advantages mentioned were: greater scheduling flexibility, wider selection of electives and course offerings, more utilization of equipment and facilities, and higher student interest and morale with a shortened time schedule.

Iowa State University (ISU) voted to convert from a quarter academic system to a semester academic system beginning fall of 1981. The ISU studies examined whether student perceptions of the learning environment differed based on grade point average, year in school, college affiliation, and involvement in student organizations (Moore, 1982). Moore concluded that the perceptions of the learning environment are affected by factors at work in the environment. Student perception was difficult to ascribe to a single factor in a particular environment.

In summary, the literature describes student preference regarding an academic delivery system, but the literature does not report any information specifically at the community college level regarding assessment of student perceptions of a pending change in calendar.

Definition of learning environment

A review of the literature revealed very few definitions of learning environment. The terms "college environment," "learning environment," and "institutional environment" were used quite often but with no definition. Several authors (e.g., Astin, 1971; Baird et al., 1980) assumed that the reader understood the terminology. Although the community college may be a different academic environment than traditional four-year institutions, the terminology used to describe the

learning environment at the community college most often appeared to be synonymous with those terms utilized with four-year institutions.

Baird, Hartnett et al (1980) state that most important aspects of a (any) college's environment are the perceptions, expectations, satisfactions, and dissatisfactions of the people who make up the college community. They have defined learning environment as the interplay among its people, processes and things (p. 2).

Iowa State University's All University Community Council's (AUCC) Learning Environment Committee (Mahlstede, 1977) identified several factors which they believe comprises the learning environment. Those factors are:

1. university scope and structure
2. curriculum
3. programs of study
4. instruction
5. grading and evaluation of student achievement
6. the university calendar
7. identification of academic impediments in channels of learning and the environment (pp. 5-6).

While these factors describe the institutional characteristics of the learning environment, there was very little focus on faculty, students, and learning.

The learning environment has been defined by Astin (1968) as to any characteristic of a college that constitutes a potential stimulus for the student. He then defined environmental stimulus as "any behavior,

event, or other observable characteristic of the institution capable of changing the students' sensory input, the existence or occurrence of which can be confirmed by independent observation" (Astin, 1968, p. 5).

While the definitions of learning environment presented were similar, Moore's (1982) definition was the most easily identified in terms of the community college, hence, his definition was used in this study. "The interaction among institutional characteristics, human relationships and campus events as they affect the process of learning" (Moore, 1982, p. 11) was defined by Moore (1982) to be the learning environment.

Student organizational involvement

Very little information was found in the literature with regard to the effects of involvement in student organization on perceptions of the learning environment.

Moore (1982) found that students who were involved in two or more organizations perceived the learning environment differently than students who were involved in one or less organizations (uninvolved students). Students who were involved in two or more student organizations perceived a higher level of student interaction with other students. In general, involved students perceived more advantages to the quarter system.

Madrazo-Peterson and Rodriquez (1978) found significant differences on the extra curricular involvement scale of the College Student Questionnaire (CSQ). They reported minority men being more involved in student organizations than the women. In a study of a British

university, researchers Manaster and Friedman (1976) found little differences between high and low participators when assessing student attitudes towards the campus.

Grade point average

Almost no information on the effects of GPA on student perceptions of the learning environment was found in the literature. Grade point average was more often reported as "achievement" and examined as a variable, i.e. how well students achieved in a particular college environment. Astin (1969) found high school academic ability was the single most important predictor of college achievement. His data suggested that students experience a GPA drop when moving from one academic delivery system to another. However, he also found that students in high quality institutions tended to perform better than students in institutions of lesser quality.

In the ISU study, there were significant differences found between "excellent" students (3.50 GPA or above) and "poorer" students (< 2.00 GPA) in determining perceptions of the quarter system learning environment (Moore, 1982). The excellent students (3.50 GPA or above):

- Perceived the semester curriculum as being more broadening and challenging
- Perceived more favorable student-faculty relations with the semester system
- Had more opportunities to collaborate with the faculty
- Expressed a stronger desire to learn under the semester system

The excellent student under the present quarter system:

- Perceived more fragmentation in their learning
- Perceived being behind in their assignments
- Felt there was too much information in their courses

The poorer (<2.00 GPA) student under the present quarter system:

- Perceived more hard work and pressure
- Were more dissatisfied with the number of places to study on campus
- Perceived more advantages to the semester system.

He concluded that the semester system seemed to promise more time, a more leisurely learning pace, improved advising, more availability of the advisors, and more time to assimilate classroom materials to those poorer (< 2.00 GPA) students.

Articulation transfer

Research was reported in the literature (Adams, 1974; Alfred, 1974; Astin, 1971; Lenning, Sauer, and Beal, 1980) that deals with the retention of students who transfer in from other educational institutions. One such study of student retention strategies, (Lenning, Sauer, and Beal, 1980) found there were many options open to institutions for retaining students. These options included: offering workshops for students, faculty, and staff; seeking nonprofessional assistance from students and the community; offering financial aid; and educating the college community about student development and intervention. However, no information was found regarding the

perceptions of students on the learning environment as they articulate to four-year institutions.

CHAPTER 3--METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the development of the instrument and the procedures used to select the sample, distribute the questionnaire, and collect the data. The statistical procedures used to analyze the data will also be reported.

Instrument development

After reviewing other documents and several comparison studies, the researcher, in consultation with her graduate committee and the Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE), decided to adapt the ISU questionnaire for use in the present study.

The ISU quarter/semester study instrument was developed by a RISE team of faculty, administrator, research assistants, and students for the purpose of studying student perceptions of the learning environment. Moore (1982) used items dealing with academic life, interpersonal relationships, and extracurricular activities as a basis for the ISU quarter/semester study. Those same areas were used for the present study.

RISE utilized a perceptual format which asked people to respond to a series of questions about their institution. Usually, respondents were asked whether an item did or did not describe the institution. The Likert-type responses were arranged in the following order:

5 -- Strongly Agree

4 -- Agree

3 -- Neither Agree or Disagree

2 -- Disagree

1 -- Strongly Disagree

Since the ISU instrument was developed for use at a university implementing a quarter/semester transition, several revisions were necessary to address student perception of the learning environment at the community college. Forty questions on the ISU instrument had no meaning for the community college atmosphere, so those were either eliminated or revised. Questions such as "What is your classification: Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior" and "Courses at ISU have broadened my view of the world" were specific to Iowa State University. Those questions and others like them were modified to reflect a community college environment. The revised instrument was then presented to key faculty, administrators, and students at DMACC and SCC for feedback on the appropriateness of each item for a community college study. This feedback was considered in developing the final instrument used for the study (see Appendix D).

Reliability and validity

Statistical reliability tests were not conducted on the instrument used in this study. Based on pilot student responses and the ISU study, it was felt the items were understood and clearly stated. Moore (1982) reported reliability figures with alpha figures ranging from .83 on most of the items to .40 on a few of the items for the instrument used at ISU.

Validity estimates are difficult to make in the area of perceptual studies (Astin, 1971). The questionnaire Moore (1982) used has had high

face validity. The validity is based on common environmental variables and the extent of the input process used in developing the individual items (Moore, 1982). Because of the extensive review and feedback by the faculty and students on the initial draft and responses of the students and faculty on the final instrument, there appeared to be support for face validity.

Sample selection

This study was a part of a longitudinal examination of the learning environment with the base data being collected in the spring of 1983, and a follow-up study which is planned for spring of 1984.

The 1984 study will utilize the 1983 respondents as a basis for data collection. Information collected from these individuals will be used for comparison to assess the change in perceptions from the quarter system to the semester system. Thus, sample selection became an important part in this study.

Based on the advice of the author's graduate committee and the Director of Research at DMACC, Dr. Ronald McClurg, it was determined that a sample of 500 would be representative of the population. This figure represented nearly 20% of the number of students at DMACC and SCC who were enrolled in either a two-year pre, para-professional, vocational, or college transfer program. There were approximately 1500 students at DMACC and 1000 students at SCC who comprise these categories.

At DMACC, the names of the programs that fit the above guidelines were put into a container and drawn at random. Programs drawn were

Fashion Merchandising, Accountant Specialist, Commerical Art, Dental Hygiene, Dental Assistant, Developmental Disabilities, Child Development, and Diesel Mechanics. Also selected were the traditional Arts and Science courses--Speech, English, Mathematics. First year courses were selected from these programs for the sample.

At SCC, Dr. William Hierstein, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, assumed responsibility for randomly selecting the programs to be included in this study. Those programs selected were: General Office Clerk, Nursing Associate, Auto Mechanics, Welding, Heavy Equipment Operator, and students in the College Parallel Program--English, Mathematics, Psychology.

Approval for this project was obtained from and granted by the President's Cabinets at both DMACC and SCC. This study and others which were being conducted under the auspices of RISE have been granted approval for research by the Human Subjects Review Committee.

Survey distribution process

Surveys were distributed the third week in April 1983 in order to maximize student response rate. This time was chosen because classes at each institution had resumed after spring/Easter vacation and it was well ahead of final examinations and year-end activities.

The questionnaires along with a cover letter from the researcher, were sent to the instructors of classes that had been previously randomly selected (see Appendix E & F). The instructors were requested to use the last 10 minutes of their class period to have the students complete the survey.

There were no follow-up mailings or collection attempts on the 500 questionnaires since 451 were returned. The remaining 49 represented those students who refused to take part in the survey or were absent from class.

Data preparation

After the questionnaires were returned, they were sequentially numbered. This was done to match any errors that later needed to be corrected.

A codebook was prepared specifying the location and number of columns for each of the 99 items. Following coding, every 5th survey was rechecked for accuracy.

The coded surveys were keypunched at the ISU Computation Center. Frequencies were run on the data. The verified data set was then stored in the computer at DMACC for future analysis.

Statistical procedure

This study was a companion study to research being done at ISU, and after consultation with the researcher's graduate committee and Research Director at DMACC, it was decided the data would be best analyzed by these statistical procedures:

1. Percentages of responses on a Likert-type scale
2. Frequencies and means
3. Factor analysis using varimax rotation
4. One way analysis of variance, including planned comparisons among treatment means

5. Pearson correlation coefficients
6. Cross-tabulations between independent variables
7. Reliability scores for all factors

CHAPTER 4--FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to ascertain student perceptions of the learning environment prior to a change in the academic calendar.

Of the 2,500 students registered at DMACC and SCC in either two year pre, para-professional, vocational, or college transfer programs, a sample of 500 was selected. This represents approximately 20% of the students enrolled in the institutional programs. Of the 451 (90% return rate) who returned the questionnaires, 65% were classified as freshmen (less than 48 quarter hours); 35% were classified as sophomores (more than 48 quarter hours). Fifty-seven percent of the respondents were female. The age distributions are reported in Table 1. This does not seem to be representative of the ages of the students at the community colleges. While some may contend that program selection may have caused a nonrepresentative age distribution, all students are required to take courses in their program. However, since night classes were not used, this may account for some of the age differences. Sheldon (1983) and Mehalllis and Mehalllis (1983) both found the community college student to be "older" than the traditional college age student. Mehalllis and Mehalllis (1983) state the average age of the community college student in the 1980s was 27 and (s)he was already employed.

Item frequencies

The survey used in this study was a 99 item questionnaire in which the students were asked to respond to items that centered around academic life, interpersonal relationships, and extra-curricular

TABLE 1. Age of Respondents

YEARS	%	N
18 - 22 years	71.7%	323
23 - 27 years	12.4%	56
28 - 50 years	15.6%	72

activities. A Likert-type five-point scale was used, with responses ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

Appendix G lists item frequencies and response rates for all 99 items. A review of the item responses indicated stronger responses for some of the items. By collapsing "Strongly Agree" statements into "Agree" categories and "Strongly Disagree" into "Disagree" category, the more extreme responses were reported in Table 2. For the purpose of reporting data, items that had differences of 20% or more were identified by the investigator.

An analysis of the item responses in Table 2 revealed very few items that reflected strong consensus. Strong consensus was identified by the researcher as any item that received 70% or above favorable response rate. Those items are reported in Table 3. Studies (Mehallis and Mehallis, 1983) have indicated students chose the community college because the community college gave them an opportunity to learn in a good instructional environment, e.g. competency-based instruction. They wanted to learn new skills that would enable them to meet the needs of

TABLE 2. Responses From Survey Showing a Difference of at Least 20%

Item		% Agree ¹	% Disagree ¹
<u>ACADEMIC SCALE</u>			
V1.)	I am glad the community college is switching to the semester system.	46.7	20.4
V3.)	The faculty encourages students to perform up to their capabilities.	75.6	8.4
V6.)	I have developed strong communication skills.	52.4	14.9
V7.)	Students do a lot of last minute cramming	72.3	8.8
V8.)	I have a strong desire to learn.	87.6	0.9
V9.)	The information provided by my counselor is accurate.	58.1	11.8
V10.)	I am behind in my assignments throughout most of the term.	21.3	62.7
V12.)	My classes are taught so that I can learn at my own pace.	23.9	51.7
V13.)	I do most of my studying on campus.	20.1	66.8
V15.)	The quality of the laboratory equipment is good.	45.0	11.5
V16.)	Most of my classes are boring.	13.8	54.8
V17.)	The college curriculum has broadened my view of the world.	57.0	13.5
V18.)	Course goals are clearly explained.	66.8	12.9
V20.)	There is sufficient number of places on campus to study.	53.0	24.8
V21.)	The quality of the instruction at the college is excellent.	55.7	11.3
V23.)	Too many tests are given in my courses.	16.2	44.3
V24.)	Courses provide an intellectual challenge.	72.7	6.2
V25.)	Much reading is expected in my courses.	46.3	14.4
V26.)	Most courses at the college require extensive out-of-class preparation.	50.2	20.8
V28.)	I like the current learning environment at the college.	64.5	10.8
<u>RELATIONSHIP SCALE</u>			
V30.)	Instructors get to know students in their classes quite well.	72.6	10.7
V31.)	I feel free to discuss exam scores with my instructor.	71.2	12.8

¹Percentages listed do not include "Neutral" category.

Table 2. (Continued)

Item	% Agree ¹ Disagree ¹	
V32.) Faculty members are sensitive to students' needs.	51.4	16.2
V33.) I socialize a lot with my friends.	62.1	14.5
V35.) It's easy to meet people here at the college.	66.1	14.4
V36.) Students frequently engage in bull sessions on campus.	54.6	10.2
V40.) I am glad that I came to this college.	74.5	6.5
V43.) If you ask, most instructors will go out of their way to help you.	67.5	10.9
V44.) Students have the opportunity to develop intimate personal relationships.	49.6	12.4
<u>EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES SCALE</u>		
V47.) Social activities usually involve the use of alcoholic beverages	47.0	17.0
V48.) Students seek advice from others.	81.0	2.0
V52.) Student elections are of great importance to students.	8.9	55.4
V53.) My contact with most administrators has been helpful.	50.5	17.1
<u>QUARTER SYSTEM SCALE</u>		
V54.) Students tend to get better grades.	40.1	12.0
V57.) Students have more time to get into the subject matter.	24.6	45.7
V58.) Students are more likely to drop courses	44.4	24.8
V60.) It is easier to change from one major to another.	47.7	8.2
V64.) There are fewer deadlines.	14.4	51.7
V66.) There is more course variety.	49.2	17.9
<u>SEMESTER SYSTEM SCALE</u>		
V68.) Instructors will have more time to prepare for their classes.	58.1	12.4
V70.) There will be more time to assimilate classroom material.	57.2	10.4
V71.) Registration will be less hassle.	49.5	17.3
V72.) Class size will increase.	53.3	9.3
V74.) There will be a more leisurely learning pace.	49.6	17.0

TABLE 3. Responses on Items with a High Degree of Consensus

Item	% Agreeing
I have a strong desire to learn.	87.6%
Students seek advice from others.	81.0%
The faculty encourages students to perform up to their capabilities.	75.6%
I am glad that I came to this college.	74.5%
Courses provide an intellectual challenge.	72.7%
Instructors get to know their students in their classes quite well.	72.6%
Students do a lot of last minute cramming.	72.3%

the changing marketplace. These items were reflective of the academic life at the community college environment at DMAC and SCC as perceived by the students. These data were merged between the two institutions because of no statistical significant differences in the responses.

Based on the data obtained, there were several items on the semester scale which apparently prompted a "No Opinion" (Neither Agree or Disagree) response. These items elicited a majority response of "No Opinion" and are reported in Table 4. It may be reasonable to conclude that because most of the respondents had no prior experience with a post-secondary school semester academic system, most were not willing to make a judgment on those items at that point in time.

Several of the items on the questionnaire asked the students to respond to the current academic year (quarter system). There were several items that had a majority of "Neither Agree or Disagree"

TABLE 4. Items on the Semester Scale with a Majority of Neither Agree or Disagree Response

Item	% Neither Agree or Disagree
My counselor will be more available for consultation.	59.9%
The quality of advising will be improved.	58.8%
My cumulative grade will not go down.	54.3%
Laboratory facilities will be less crowded.	50.6%

responses. Those items are shown in Table 5. It was difficult to determine whether the students meant they had no opinion or they were neutral on those items. Reasons for the majority response could be lack of information given to the students with regard to tutoring, volunteerism, personal problem solving, lack of understanding of the

TABLE 5. Items Reflecting the Current Academic Environment with a Majority Neither Agree or Disagree Response

Item	% Neither Agree or Disagree
Tutoring is available to students at a reasonable cost	56.5%
Students have an opportunity to volunteer their time for community service projects.	55.9%
Students problems are promptly resolved.	55.4%
Courses at the college stress the abstract more than the concrete.	53.2%

question on the questionnaire by the student, or students may not perceive themselves as having problems, needing to volunteer, or needing tutoring. It also may be that the services available to the community college student had not been adequately addressed. Thompson (1983) stated, "The old traditions must be integrated into new procedures. We must recognize that the educational needs, social needs, and personal needs of today's students all differ from those students in the last two decades" (p. 49).

T-Tests

The null hypothesis stated: Students will perceive no significant difference of the learning environment under a semester system as compared to the present quarter system. Students did perceive a significant difference ($t = -8.61$, $p < .01$) between the present quarter system learning environment and future semester system (see Table 6). The students perceived that under the semester system there would be more time to assimilate classroom materials, instructors would have more time to prepare for their classes, as well as providing a more leisurely learning pace. They also felt class size would increase, registration would be less hassle, and there would be less expense for books and supplies.

The second null hypothesis to be tested was: Students will perceive no significant difference in grade point average under a semester system when compared to the present quarter system. This null hypothesis is not rejected. Students perceive their grade point will

TABLE 6. T Test for Perceived Learning Environment Differences

Variable	Number of Cases	Mean	S.D.	T-value	DF
Quarter Learning Environment		2.9330	0.574		
	451			-8.61**	450
Semester Learning Environment		3.2647	0.558		

**p < 0.01.

remain approximately the same under the impending semester system (see Table 7).

TABLE 7. T Test for Perceived Change in Grade Point Average

Variable	Number of Cases	Mean	S.D.	T-value	DF	Probability
Quarter Grades		3.3503	0.860			
	451			3.56**	450	
Semester Grades		3.1242	0.873			

**p < 0.01.

Based on the data collected, the third null hypothesis was not rejected: Students will perceive no significant difference in transferring to four-year institutions under a semester system as compared to the present quarter system. The students responding perceived no significant difference in transferring to four-year institutions under either the present quarter or future semester system. One of the reasons this hypothesis may not have been rejected was that many students reported they were not planning to transfer to four-year institutions at this time.

Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 relate to significant differences between DMACC and SCC students. These hypotheses are not rejected. Hypothesis 4 stated: When DMACC students are compared to SCC students, the perceptions of the learning environment under a semester system as compared to the present quarter system will not be significantly different. Hypothesis 5: When DMACC students are compared to SCC students, the perceptions of their grade point average under a semester system as compared to the present quarter system will not be significantly different. Hypothesis 6: When DMACC students are compared to SCC students, the perceptions of transferring to four-year institutions under a semester system as compared to the present quarter system will not be significantly different. There were no significant differences observed between DMACC and SCC students with regard to their perceptions of the learning environment, grade point average, and/or transferring to four-year institutions. This was somewhat surprising because of the observable differences in the populations at the two

community colleges which were discussed in the first chapter of this study. There appeared, at least outwardly, to be some differences. Also, at the time of the survey, there were several reassignments at the administrative level at DMACC that could have adversely affected student attitude with regard to their perceptions of the learning environment. However, those events apparently had no bearing on the students' perceptions of the learning environment.

Factor analysis

Individual items on the quarter and semester learning environment were subjected to factor analysis using the principal factoring with iteration method followed by varimax rotation.

Table 8 describes the results of the factor analysis procedure for the quarter learning environment scale. Three factors were identified--one labeled as relating to classroom management, one labeled as relating to course work, and one labeled as relating to academic advantages.

Individual items on the semester learning environment scale were also subjected to factor analysis. Those data are reflected on Table 9. Two factors were identified--one relating to semester advantages and one relating to academic pressure.

Factors were formed by automatically including items loading .50 or greater, including items falling between .30 and .50 if they appeared to fit with the other items in that factor (Bohrnstedt and Knoke, 1982). Those items are found on Table 10 and Table 11.

TABLE 8. Factor Matrix--Quarter Scale

Item	Factor 1 (Classroom Management)	Factor 2 (Course Work)	Factor 3 (Academic Advantages)
<u>QUARTER SCALE</u>			
V54 Students tend to get better grades	.299	-.246	.404 ¹
V55 Students have to take too many courses during a quarter	.036	-.602 ¹	-.104
V56 Students graduate sooner	.330 ¹	-.260	.265
V57 Students have more time to get into the subject matter	.658 ¹	.271	.103
V58 Students are more likely to drop courses	-.159	-.327 ¹	-.017
V59 Students get to know their classmates better	.621 ¹	.000	.249
V60 It is easier to change from one major to another	.051	-.086	.669 ¹
V61 Final exams cover more content	.566 ¹	-.202	-.012
V62 There is a more leisurely learning pace	.680 ¹	.186	.189
V63 There is a better use of textbooks	.669 ¹	.219	.195
V64 There are fewer deadlines	.546 ¹	.283	.129
V65 The spacing of exams is better	.613 ¹	.364 ¹	.201
V66 There is more course variety	.190	.187	.409 ¹
V67 Too much information is crammed into each course	.132	.561 ¹	.001

¹Items loading on that factor.

TABLE 9. Factor Matrix -- Semester Scale

Item	Factor 4 (Semester Advantages)	Factor 5 (Academic Pressures)
<u>SEMESTER SCALE</u>		
V68 Instructors will have more time to prepare for their classes	.670 ¹	.023
V69 Laboratory facilities will be less crowded	.677 ¹	.200
V70 There will be more time to assimilate classroom material	.732 ¹	.204
V71 Registration will be less hassle	.632 ¹	.005
V72 Class size will increase	.344 ¹	-.293
V73 The quality of advising will go down	.703 ¹	.021
V74 There will be a more leisurely learning pace	.700 ¹	.202
V75 Students will be better able to get into the classes they need	.592 ¹	.118
V76 The total cost of a year's books will go down	.483 ¹	.164
V77 The homework load will increase	.089	.623 ¹
V78 My cumulative grade point will go down	.160	-.570 ¹
V79 My counselor will be more available for consultation	.590 ¹	-.042

¹Items loading on that factor.

TABLE 10. Factor Analysis Results for Quarter Scale

Item Number	Item Statement	Factor Loading
<u>Classroom management</u>		
V56	Students graduate sooner.	.331
V57	Students have more time to get into the subject matter.	.658
V59	Students get to know their classmates better.	.621
V61	Final exams cover more content.	.566
V62	There is a more leisurely learning pace.	.680 ¹
V63	There is a better use of textbooks.	.669
V64	There are fewer deadlines.	.546
V65	The spacing of exams is better.	.613
<u>Course work</u>		
V55	Students have to take too many courses during the quarter.	-.602 ¹
V58	Students are more likely to drop courses.	-.327
V65	The spacing of exams is better.	.364
V67	Too much information is crammed into each course.	.561
<u>Academic advantages</u>		
V54	Students tend to get better grades.	.404
V60	It is easier to change from one major to another.	.669 ¹
V66	There is more course variety.	.409

¹The dominant item in the factor.

TABLE 11. Factor Analysis Results for Semester Scale

Item Number	Item Statement	Factor Loading
<u>Semester Advantage</u>		
V68	Instructors will have more time to prepare for their classes.	.670
V69	Laboratory facilities will be less crowded.	.677
V70	There will be more time to assimilate classroom material.	.732 ¹
V71	Registration will be less hassle.	.632
V72	Class size will increase.	.344
V73	The quality of advising will be improved.	.703
V74	There will be a more leisurely learning pace.	.700
V75	Students will be better able to get into the classes they need.	.611
V79	My counselor will be more available for consultation.	.590
<u>Academic pressure</u>		
V77	The homework load will increase.	.623 ¹
V78	My cumulative grade point will go down.	.570

¹The dominant item in the factor.

Reliability

Reliability data on the quarter/semester learning environment were estimated by use of Cronbach's alpha. The results are reported on Table 12. Alpha is a measure of the internal consistency of a set of items and ranges from zero to unity. Bohrnstedt and Knoke (1982) state that any scale which is widely used and widely known should have an alpha of .80 or above. On scales that do not meet that criteria, alphas at .70 or higher are considered moderately high degrees of reliability. The

TABLE 12. Reliability Analysis for Scale (Quarter/Semester)

Scale	Number of Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Ave. Cor.	Alpha
Quarter	9	28.32	5.69	0.33	0.81
Semester	8	22.27	4.50	0.28	0.77

present scale was neither widely used nor widely known so the alphas found at .81 and .77 may be considered to be a moderately high degree of reliability.

Correlation

The individual items within the factors were also subjected to Pearson correlation analysis to determine the degree of inter-item relationships. Tables 13 and 14 describe the correlation coefficients that resulted from this analysis.

Any correlation that is high (.40 or greater) (Bohrnstedt and Knoke, 1982) was addressed below. The grouping of variables in the quarter system learning environment revolved around the academic/scholarship area of the community college life. Variable 59 (get to know my classmates better), V62 (more leisurely learning pace), V63 (better use of textbooks), V64 (fewer deadlines), V65 (spacing of exams is better) all relate to the student who was satisfied with the quarter system learning environment. These students were succeeding in this environment.

TABLE 13. Correlation Matrix for Items on the Quarter Learning Environment Scale

Variable	57	59	62	63	64	65
57 (More time for class material)	1.00					
59 (Get to know classmates better)	.44	1.00				
62 (More leisurely learning pace)	.55	.49	1.00			
63 (Better use of textbooks)	.53	.44	.54	1.00		
64 (Fewer deadlines)	.42	.32	.51	.42	1.00	
65 (Spacing of exams is better)	.48	.41	.48	.54	.60	1.00

Another subset of cohorts appeared to be less satisfied with the quarter system learning environment and were looking forward to the transition to the semester system as a new chance to be successful. They felt there was not enough time to get into the subject matter and there was too much information crammed into each course.

High correlations on the semester system learning environment centered around the academic area of campus life. Variable 69 (laboratory facilities will be less crowded), Variable 70 (more time to assimilate classroom materials), V71 (registration will be less hassle), V74 (more leisurely learning pace), V75 (students will be better able to

TABLE 14. Correlation Matrix for Items on the Semester Learning Environment Scale

Variable	69	70	72	74	75
69 (Laboratory facilities less crowded)	1.00				
70 (More time to assimilate classroom material)	.58	1.00			
71 (Registration will be less hassle)	.40	.47	1.00		
74 (More leisurely learning pace)	.53	.59	.46	1.00	
75 (Students better able to get classes)	.47	.33	.36	.44	1.00

get into the classes they need), all seemed to indicate students were looking forward to the semester system.

Cross tabulations

For purposes of this research it was necessary to review the relationships that existed between the independent variables in this study. Tables 15 through 26 reflect the comparisons between these variables.

The relationship between the independent variables are identified on the following pages. Table 15 indicated that the campuses at Ankeny and Burlington, the largest attendance centers at DMACC and SCC, had students whose ages (18-24) fall into the "traditional" college age.

This was somewhat surprising as studies by Mehallis and Mehallis (1983) suggested that the community college student was older (average age was 27). This was not the case in the present study. They also suggested that community college students work at least part-time. Table 18 (campus by working now) and 25 (Program by working now) demonstrate that most of the students in the four programs at all five campuses were working while attending school.

The community college student has been portrayed as a "job seeker," "job up-grader," "career changer," and/or "license maintainer" (Sheldon, 1983) who did not transfer to four-year institutions to complete a baccalaureate degree. Tables 17 (Academic Program Enrollment), 20 (Articulation Plans to Transfer), and 26 (Program by Planning to Transfer) reinforced that belief. Public services careers students, defined as those students enrolled in Speech, English, Psychology, Mathematics, Child Development, and Developmental Disabilities, plan to transfer to four-year institutions. The other students in the other three programs were classified as vocational and were not planning at this time to transfer to four-year institutions.

Tables 16 (Academic Classification) and 21 (Classification by Academic Program) revealed little information other than most of the respondents were Freshmen students and in the Business and Management Programs (Fashion Merchandising, Accountant Specialist, or General Office Clerk Programs).

TABLE 15. Age of Enrolled Students

COUNT					
ROW PCT					
COL PCT					
TOT PCT	17-20 yrs	21-24 yrs	25-30 yrs	Over 30 yrs	ROW TOTAL TOT PCT.
CAMPUS					
Ankeny	126	28	17	15	186
	67.7	15.1	9.1	8.1	41.2
	44.4	44.4	31.5	30.0	
	27.9	6.2	3.8	3.3	
Urban	12	9	12	11	44
	27.3	20.5	27.3	25.0	9.8
	4.2	14.3	22.2	22.0	
	2.7	2.0	2.7	2.4	
Boone	13	8	6	3	30
	43.3	26.7	20.0	10.0	6.7
	4.6	12.7	11.1	6.0	
	2.9	1.8	1.3	0.7	
Burlington	106	16	7	11	140
	75.7	11.4	5.0	7.9	31.0
	37.3	25.4	13.0	22.0	
	23.5	3.5	1.6	2.4	
Keokuk	27	2	12	10	51
	52.9	3.9	23.5	19.6	11.3
	9.5	3.2	22.2	20.0	
	6.0	0.4	2.7	2.2	
COLUMN	284	63	54	50	451
TOTAL	63.0	14.0	12.0	11.1	100.0
Chi Square = 61.86 12 Degrees of Freedom Significance < 0.001.					

TABLE 16. Academic Classification

COUNT ROW PCT COL PCT TOT PCT	Freshman	Sophomore	ROW TOTAL TOT PCT.
CAMPUS			
Ankeny	179	7	186
	96.2	3.8	41.2
	45.0	13.2	
	39.7	1.6	
Urban	16	28	44
	36.4	63.6	9.8
	4.0	52.8	
	3.5	6.2	
Boone	22	8	30
	73.3	26.7	6.7
	5.5	15.1	
	4.9	1.8	
Burlington	136	4	140
	97.1	2.9	31.0
	34.2	7.5	
	30.2	0.9	
Keokuk	45	6	51
	88.2	11.8	11.3
	11.3	11.3	
	10.0	1.3	
COLUMN TOTAL	398 88.2	53 11.8	451 100.0
Chi Square = 142.76 4 Degrees of Freedom Significance < 0.001.			

TABLE 17. Academic Program Enrollment

COUNT					
ROW PCT		Industrial		Public	
COL PCT	Business &	&	Health &	Service	ROW TOTAL
TOT PCT	Management	Technical	Science	Careers	TOT PCT.
<hr/>					
CAMPUS					
Ankeny	69	33	37	41	180
	38.3	18.3	20.6	22.8	43.9
	44.8	49.3	62.7	31.5	
	16.8	8.0	9.0	10.0	
Urban	13	0	5	19	37
	35.1	0.0	13.5	51.4	9.0
	8.4	0.0	8.5	14.6	
	3.2	0.0	1.2	4.6	
Boone	11	0	2	14	27
	40.7	0.0	7.4	51.9	6.6
	7.1	0.0	3.4	10.8	
	2.7	0.0	0.5	3.4	
Burlington	45	23	14	38	120
	37.5	19.2	11.7	31.7	29.3
	29.2	34.3	23.7	29.2	
	11.0	5.6	3.4	9.3	
Keokuk	16	11	1	18	46
	34.8	23.9	2.2	39.1	11.2
	10.4	16.4	1.7	13.8	
	3.9	2.7	0.2	4.4	
COLUMN	154	67	59	130	410
TOTAL	37.6	16.3	14.4	31.7	100.0
<hr/>					
Chi Square = 37.71 12 Degrees of Freedom Significance < 0.001.					
<hr/>					

TABLE 18. Number of Students Employed While Attending School

COUNT ROW PCT COL PCT TOT PCT	Yes	No	ROW TOTAL TOT PCT.
CAMPUS			
Ankeny	116	70	186
	62.4	37.6	41.2
	41.0	41.7	
	25.7	15.5	
Urban	34	10	44
	77.3	22.7	9.8
	12.0	6.0	
	7.5	2.2	
Boone	13	17	30
	43.3	56.7	6.7
	4.6	10.1	
	2.9	3.8	
Burlington	93	47	140
	66.4	33.6	31.0
	32.9	28.0	
	20.6	10.4	
Keokuk	27	24	51
	52.9	47.1	11.3
	9.5	14.3	
	6.0	5.3	
COLUMN TOTAL	283	168	451
	62.7	37.3	100.0
Chi Square = 11.73 4 Degrees of Freedom Significance = 0.02.			

TABLE 19. Persons Who Have Attended Other Institutions on Semesters

COUNT ROW PCT COL PCT TOT PCT	Yes	No	ROW TOTAL TOT PCT.
CAMPUS			
Ankeny	29	157	186
	15.6	84.4	41.2
	40.3	41.4	
	6.4	34.8	
Urban	18	26	44
	40.9	59.1	9.8
	25.0	6.9	
	4.0	5.8	
Boone	6	24	30
	20.0	80.0	6.7
	8.3	6.3	
	1.3	5.3	
Burlington	12	128	140
	8.6	91.4	31.0
	16.7	33.8	
	2.7	28.4	
Keokuk	7	44	51
	13.7	86.3	11.3
	9.7	11.6	
	1.6	9.8	
COLUMN TOTAL	72	379	451
	16.0	84.0	100.0
Chi Square = 26.69 4 Degrees of Freedom Significance < 0.001.			

TABLE 20. Articulation Plans to Transfer

COUNT			
ROW PCT			
COL PCT			
TOT PCT	Yes	No	ROW TOTAL TOT PCT.
CAMPUS			
Ankeny	47	139	186
	25.3	74.7	41.2
	22.4	57.7	
	10.4	30.8	
Urban	36	8	44
	81.8	18.2	9.8
	17.1	3.3	
	8.0	1.8	
Boone	21	9	30
	70.0	30.0	6.7
	10.0	3.7	
	4.7	2.0	
Burlington	82	58	140
	58.6	41.4	31.0
	39.0	24.1	
	18.2	12.9	
Keokuk	24	27	51
	47.1	52.9	11.3
	11.4	11.2	
	5.3	6.0	
COLUMN	210	241	451
TOTAL	46.6	53.4	100.0
Chi Square = 70.62 4 Degrees of Freedom Significance < 0.001.			

TABLE 21. Classification by Academic Program

COUNT ROW PCT COL PCT TOT PCT	Business & Management	Industrial & Technical	Health & Science	Public Service Careers	ROW TOTAL TOT PCT.
Freshman	103 39.9 66.9 25.1	47 18.2 70.1 11.5	23 8.9 39.0 5.6	85 32.9 65.4 20.7	258 62.9
Sophomore	51 33.6 33.1 12.4	20 13.2 29.9 4.9	36 23.7 61.0 8.8	45 29.6 34.6 11.0	152 37.1
COLUMN TOTAL	154 37.6	67 16.3	59 14.4	130 31.7	410 100.0
Chi Square = 17.37 3 Degrees of Freedom Significance < 0.001.					

Students at the five campuses had not attended other institutions on the semester system (Tables 19 and 23) nor were they planning to do so (Tables 20 and 26) at that time.

The majority of the respondents in the study were single as shown in Table 22 (Classification by Marital Status). Roughly 84% of the students were single; 16% were married. This study was similar to Moore's (1982) study where he found 85% of the students were single; 15% married.

Table 24 (Academic Enrollment by Population Sample) indicated a majority of females were in the Business and Management Health and Science (Dental Hygiene, Dental Assistant, and Nursing Associate

TABLE 22. Classification by Marital Status

COUNT ROW PCT COL PCT TOT PCT	Single	Married	ROW TOTAL TOT PCT.
Freshman	253	39	292
	86.6	13.4	64.7
	67.1	52.7	
	56.1	8.6	
Sophomore	124	35	159
	78.0	22.0	35.3
	32.9	47.3	
	27.5	7.8	
COLUMN	377	74	451
TOTAL	83.6	16.4	100.0
Chi Square = 5.01 1 Degree of Freedom Significance = 0.03.			

Programs), and Public Services Careers. The largest enrollment in the Industrial and Technical Programs (Commercial Art, Diesel Mechanics, Auto Mechanics, Welding, and Heavy Equipment Operator Programs) in this study were male. Mehallis and Mehallis (1983) felt that specialized programs such as these had brought women into the community college. The present study found that female respondents at DMACC and SCC were in those programs that were viewed as traditionally female oriented (Nursing, Dental Assistant, Dental Hygiene).

TABLE 23. Classification by Ever Attended Institutions on Semesters

COUNT ROW PCT COL PCT TOT PCT	Yes	No	ROW TOTAL TOT PCT.
Freshman	33 11.3 45.8 7.3	259 88.7 68.3 57.4	292 64.7
Sophomore	39 24.5 54.2 8.6	120 75.5 31.7 26.6	159 35.3
COLUMN TOTAL	72 16.0	379 84.0	451 100.0
Chi Square = 12.46 1 Degree of Freedom Significance < 0.001.			

Summary

This study attempted to determine whether students perceived a difference in a quarter system learning environment when compared to a semester learning environment. The study also attempted to ascertain whether student perceptions of the learning environment were affected by grade point average, and/or articulation to four-year institutions. As a part of this study, DMACC and SCC were compared to determine whether there are campus differences with regard to the perceptions of the learning environment.

Significant differences were found between the student's perceptions of the learning environment under the quarter system when

TABLE 24. Academic Enrollment by Population Sample

COUNT			
ROW PCT			
COL PCT			
TOT PCT	Male	Female	ROW TOTAL TOT PCT.
ACADEMIC PROGRAM			
Business & Management	45	109	154
	29.2	70.8	37.6
	25.6	46.6	
	11.0	26.6	
Industrial & Technical	67	0	67
	100.0	0.0	16.3
	38.1	0.0	
	16.3	0.0	
Health & Science	6	53	59
	10.2	89.8	14.4
	3.4	22.6	
	1.5	12.9	
Public Services Careers	58	72	130
	44.6	55.4	31.7
	33.0	30.8	
	14.1	17.6	
COLUMN TOTAL	176	234	410
	42.9	57.1	100.0
Chi Square = 126.88 3 Degrees of Freedom Significance < 0.001.			

compared to a semester system. The semester system was believed to be better in terms of better utilization of classroom time, textbooks, better exam schedules, and more time to assimilate classroom materials.

The students felt their grade point average would not go down under the semester system, but rather remain approximately the same. This

TABLE 25. Number of Students Working

COUNT			
ROW PCT			
COL PCT			
TOT PCT	Yes	No	ROW TOTAL TOT PCT.
ACADEMIC PROGRAM			
Business & Management	104 67.5 41.4 25.4	50 32.5 31.4 12.2	154 37.6
Industrial & Technical	40 59.7 15.9 9.8	27 40.3 17.0 6.6	67 16.3
Health & Science'	27 45.8 10.8 6.6	32 54.2 20.1 7.8	59 14.4
Public Services Careers	80 61.5 31.9 19.5	50 38.5 31.4 12.2	130 31.7
COLUMN TOTAL	251 61.2	159 38.8	410 100.0
Chi Square = 8.59 3 Degrees of Freedom Significance = 0.04.			

significance could be questioned as there were less than 10 students tested whose GPA was below 2.00, while 236 (58.4%) reported a GPA of 3.00 or above.

There were no differences between the students at DMACC and SCC. Both groups perceived the learning environments in the same manner.

TABLE 26. Program by Planning to Transfer

COUNT ROW PCT COL PCT TOT PCT	Yes	No	ROW TOTAL TOT PCT.
ACADEMIC PROGRAM			
Business & Management	60 39.0 33.0 14.6	94 61.0 41.2 22.9	154 37.6
Industrial & Technical	8 11.9 4.4 2.0	59 88.1 25.9 14.4	67 16.3
Health & Science	11 18.6 6.0 2.7	48 81.4 21.1 11.7	59 14.4
Public Services Careers	103 79.2 56.6 25.1	27 20.8 11.8 6.6	130 31.7
COLUMN TOTAL	182 44.4	228 55.6	410 100.0
Chi Square = 100.19 3 Degrees of Freedom Significance < 0.001.			

Apparently the students' primary responsibility at these two community colleges was to gain an education.

There were students who differed on their perceptions of the learning environment. Those perceptions should be of assistance to

administrators and student leaders as they seek to determine the best learning environment for the students at DMACC and SCC.

CHAPTER 5--CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

The results of this study supported the hypothesis that students perceived a significant difference in the learning environment under a semester system when compared to a quarter system. However, students perceived that no significant change would occur in their grade point average under a semester system. This chapter summarizes those findings and the conclusions of this study as well as offering recommendations for future research.

In the past, the most widely used assessment instruments to study campus environment were perceptual in nature. Student perceptions were used when comparisons were made between institutions or within institutions, such as comparing students to faculty, or one group of students to another. These data that were generated from the perceptual measures were usually unavailable from any other source (Baird, Hartnett et al, 1980). However, there were limitations to the perceptual approach. Those limitations included:

1. A person's perceptions of social institutions depended on many things, such as student attitude and characteristics had been influenced by the environment, and it may have been difficult to make a generalization about the meaning of the collective perception.
2. Accuracy of perceptions depended on the knowledge and perspective of the respondent(s), a factor that would vary by person and topic.

3. A respondent could only respond to those items that had been included in the instrument and then only in the format presented.
4. Respondents may not have been the most useful population to evaluate programs in institutions.
5. Most of the perceptual measures did not directly identify the source of the environmental impact (Baird, 1980).

Limitations of the perceptual format lie primarily with the accuracy of the perceptions as being true measures of the environment. There was also an underlying assumption that any influence that would adversely affect the perceptions of the sample population were randomly distributed enough so the perceptions of the sample population were fairly accurate of the environment. This was especially true if the sample were large. In the present study, the sample was large (500) and the return rate was exceedingly high (90%) which minimized the limitations of the perceptual approach. Even though the newness of the instrument could have contributed to the impreciseness in measuring the environment, the factor reliability of .81 and .77 indicated accurate aggregate perceptions of the environment at DMACC and SCC.

As stated in the introduction to this study, the mission of both DMACC and SCC is to offer quality educational programs and courses to meet the needs of the community. Some students believed the quarter system was a good delivery system as they were succeeding in that mode of delivery. These students were not concerned with the demands of the

quarter calendar which had been a stated concern of the administration at DMACC and SCC.

One-third of the respondents were neutral or had no opinion in their responses regarding the impending transition to the semester system. Students apparently viewed quality education as the most important factor for educational success rather than that of the academic delivery system. However, a major finding of this study was that students did perceive a significant difference in the impending semester learning environment when compared to the present quarter learning environment. Students perceived that the semester system would allow them to receive instruction that had been better prepared, and it would allow them more time to assimilate the material. These attitudes also pointed to the fact that students were apparently more concerned with a quality education. But at the same time, they felt that classroom size would increase and that may have an effect on the quality of the education they received.

Students also believed that their GPA would remain approximately the same under the semester system as under the quarter system. The reader should be cautioned that the majority of students in this study were above the minimal level of performance. Three hundred ninety-seven students all had grade point averages at 2.00 and above on a 4.00 scale; seven had grade point averages below 2.00; forty-seven chose not to reveal their grade point average. Another consideration was that the majority of the respondents in this study were freshmen who had had

little experience with any post high school academic delivery system other than the current quarter academic system.

One of the concerns shared by both Dr. Callison and Dr. Borgen was the problems that students were experiencing when articulating to four-year institutions. This did not appear to be a concern expressed by the students at either of the institutions. Less than one-half (47%) were planning to transfer to four-year institutions. It must be remembered that the majority of the respondents were freshmen who might not plan any further education beyond the Associate of Science degree. Also, those students may have decided to put the decision to articulate to four-year institutions off until the end of the next year.

Almost no information was generated with regard to student organizational involvement or social interaction. The students apparently viewed DMACC and SCC as the place to gain an education that would be used in their life's work. The questions on the questionnaire that addressed student organizational involvement or social interaction (V. 29, V. 34, V. 37, V. 38, V. 39, V. 41, V. 42, V. 52) (see Appendix D) resulted in either "Disagree" or "Neither Agree or Disagree" responses. Moore (1982) found that upperclassmen were more involved in student organizations while lower classmen were not as involved. Is it possible that as the community college student becomes more and more comfortable with the environment (s)he would feel feel more comfortable with student organizational involvement?

Since this study was designed as a companion study to the study conducted by Moore (1982), a comparison of the data generated would seem to be in order.

Comparison with Moore study

A major finding in Moore's (1982) study was that grade point average had a significant effect on student perception of the learning environment and of the calendar change. Students whose grade point average was 3.50-4.00 were succeeding in the quarter system learning environment; the student whose GPA was below 2.00 was not succeeding under the quarter system and looked to the semester system to give them more time to be successful and experience less pressure. In the present study, the majority of the students were above the minimal level of performance and were both successful in the quarter system and looking forward to the semester system.

Moore (1982) found upperclass students who were involved in two or more student organizations perceived more advantages to the quarter system. The present study found almost no information generated with regard to student organizational involvement.

Freshmen and graduate students were less opposed to the calendar change in Moore's (1982) study. The majority of students in the present study were freshmen, and they also perceived the semester system would be better than the quarter system.

Under the semester system, Moore (1982) found that 13% of the students perceived their GPA would go down under the semester system. The researcher in the present study found 17% of the students perceived

their GPA would go down under the semester system. In the present study students perceived their GPA to remain approximately the same.

Recommendations

The instrument used in this study along with those studies at ISU (Moore, 1982; Kelley, 1983) indicated accurate measurement of student perceptions of the learning environment. With continued refinement, the perceptual instrument would accurately measure perceptions on other college campuses.

In community college studies, it may be helpful to eliminate those items that are specific to student organizational involvement because of the nature of the community college environment. Additional refinement and use of this instrument at the community college level may ensure community college congruency. Another study similar to this study should be conducted at the end of the first year of the semester system. Also, a study five years hence is necessary to add to the body of research.

Additional studies need to be done at other institutions that have or are considering converting to a different academic delivery system. The development of a body of research should produce results that would generalize to other campus situations.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of students of the learning environment at Des Moines Area Community College and Southeastern Community College prior to the transition to

the semester academic system. Also, the study was a companion study to quarter/semester research that was conducted at Iowa State University.

Des Moines Area Community College is the largest community college in Iowa; roughly 20% of the state's population reside in the district. Southeastern Community Collge serves the southeastern corner of the state with the Mississippi River and the Iowa-Missouri border as boundaries.

In 1965, the 61st General Assembly mandated that the state of Iowa be divided into 16 merged educational areas. A part of the mandate stipulated that those areas which organized as area vocational schools would be on the quarter academic system. Within both the merged educational areas at DMACC and SCC were existing junior colleges that were operating on the semester system. Since both DMACC and SCC organized as area vocational schools, to comply with the mandate, the academic delivery system at the junior colleges had to be the quarter academic system.

Early in 1981, the language of the mandate was changed to give additional flexibility to the academic calendar at area vocational schools. This along with the fact that many of the four-year institutions in the geographic area were already on the semester academic system and ISU converted to the semester system in the fall of 1982 prompted DMACC and SCC to initiate plans to restructure their current calendars. In the fall of 1983, both of the institutions would be on the semester academic delivery system.

The review of the literature revealed there were very few studies that address student perception of the learning environment. The topical areas included in the review of literature were grade point average, student organizational involvement, and ease of articulation to four-year institutions as they relate to the conversion from one academic delivery system to another.

Very little research was available on the effect of involvement in student organization, GPA, and articulation to four-year institutions on the preceptions of the learning environment. For the study at ISU, Moore (1982) used an instrument that had a perceptual format with a Likert-type five point scale with responses scaled from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." The instrument used in this study was adopted from an instrument developed by RISE at ISU. The final instrument was a 99 item questionnaire designed to focus on the most important context areas--learning environment, relationships, and extra-curricular activities.

The present study was intended to be part of a longitudinal examination of the community college learning environment. Because of this sample selection was a very important factor in the study. A sample of 500 was randomly drawn across both institutions.

The surveys were distributed during early spring 1982 to insure good maximum response. Four hundred fifty-one questionnaires were completed and returned to the Director of Research office at DMACC. Forty-nine students either refused to take part in the survey or were

not in attendance on that particular day. No attempt was made to try to follow-up on those nonresponses.

The data were analyzed by the following procedures.

1. Percentages of responses on a Likert-type scale
2. Frequencies and means
3. Factor analysis using varimax rotation
4. One way analysis of variance, including planned comparisons among treatment means
5. Pearson correlation coefficients
6. Cross-tabulations between independent variables
7. Reliability scores for all factors

Findings indicated the majority of the respondents (65%) were Freshmen, (less than 48 quarter hours), female (57%), whose ages fell into the "traditional" (18-24) (77%) age category. Also, 37% of the respondents were in the Business and Management Programs; 63% of the respondents were working while they attended the community college. This finding supported Mehallis and Mehallis (1983) who found most (62%) community college students worked either full or part-time while attending classes. The respondents had not attended institutions that were on a semester system (84%) nor were the majority planning to do so (53%) at that time.

A major finding of this study was that students perceived a significant difference of the learning environment under the semester system as compared to the present quarter system. Students perceived under the semester system they would have more time to assimilate

classroom materials which had been better prepared by the instructor. They also felt there would be a more leisurely learning pace.

Students perceived there would be no significant difference in their grade point average under a semester system as compared to the present quarter system. Students did not perceive their grade point average would drop under the semester system but would remain approximately the same. The majority of the respondents were not planning to transfer to four-year institutions; consequently, the hypothesis that stated "Students perceive no significant differences in transferring to four-year institutions under a semester system as compared to the present quarter system" also failed to be rejected.

When comparing DMACC with SCC students on perceptions of the learning environment, GPA, transferring to four-year institutions under the semester system as compared to the present quarter system, there were no significant differences. Both groups of students had the same perceptions. This was surprising as the investigator felt there were differences in the student bodies--geographically and administratively. There were students who differed on their perceptions of the learning environment and those perceptions should be of use to administrators as well as student leaders as they seek to determine the best learning environment for students.

The present study attempted to determine whether or not the perceptions of the students with regard to the learning environment was significantly different under a semester system as compared to the present quarter system. The data, information, and results that were

generated by this study should add to the growing body of knowledge in the area of student perceptions of the learning environment.

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Without the financial support of the Office of Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Research Institute for Studies in Education, this study would not have been possible. Thank you.

A big thank you must certainly go to my friends, the students, and faculty at DMACC and SCC who really made this study possible. Thank you Dr. Borgen, Dr. Callison, Bill Hierstein, Gene Snyders, and Dr. Ron McClurg.

To my son, Bill, thank you for coding all those questionnaires.

Finally to my best friend and husband, Tom, heartfelt thanks for his patience as well as his faith in me for all those years of study. We finally made it!

APPENDIX A: GOALS STATEMENT--DMACC

The goals of Des Moines Area Community College are:

1. To assess the diverse educational needs of organizations and individuals within the college district and offer, within available resources, educational programs and services which are responsive to those needs.
2. To provide, in partnership with business, industry and related organization, programs and services which promote the economic development of communities within the college district.
3. To effectively inform the general public, business, industry, and prospective students concerning the educational programs and opportunities available through the college.
4. To provide accessibility to educational programs and services through flexibility in program design and, to the extent possible, scheduling of offerings at times and locations convenient to those who desire to utilize the services.
5. To extend educational opportunities, within available resources, to all persons who desire and can profit from them, including the handicapped, economically disadvantaged, under-educated, minorities, and older adults.
6. To diminish barriers which prevent student participation in college programs.
7. To pursue policies, activities, and services which enhance productivity and quality of work life for employees.
8. To provide adequate funding to support the college

operations, programs and services.

9. To maintain policies and operating procedures for guiding the accomplishment of the college mission.
10. To maintain a strategic and tactical plan designed to improve college operations and demonstrate accountability.
11. To provide a comprehensive staff development program which supports the professional growth of staff members consistent with the college mission and goals (Bengston, 1983).

APPENDIX B: GOAL STATEMENT--SCC

The goals of Southeastern Community College are:

1. Provide for intellectual and social growth through the development of the student's abilities, attitudes, and values.
2. Provide curriculum designed for those students who wish to transfer.
3. Prepare the student for entrance into or advancement within an occupation.
4. Provide for the development of skills and knowledge based upon the individual student's ability and interest.
5. Provide community service encompassing cultural enrichment, educational, civic and general interest activities.
6. Provide counseling assistance to students in identifying their interest, aptitudes, and selection of curricula (Callison, 1983).

APPENDIX C: SCC SURVEY INSTRUMENT

TO: SCC Staff Members

85

FROM: The Administrative Cabinet

DATE: April 12, 1979

TOPIC: Quarter-Semester System Preference

In recent weeks the Administrative Cabinet spent considerable time in discussing a number of changes which have occurred in higher education since the 1970-71 academic year, when Southeastern Community College adopted the Quarter Term System as the basis for all college-credit course offerings. As a result of certain of these changes, the question of the most appropriate term system to be utilized in meeting our institutional role has arisen. The overall issue of which term system (Quarter or Semester) is most appropriate for SCC's needs can only be properly answered after an indepth study of all related issues is conducted. The immediate question is one of determining whether or not such an indepth study should be taken at this time. The Administrative Cabinet views the term system preference as shown by students and faculty as being an important factor in considering this immediate question. Would you please assist us with this matter by completing this survey instrument and returning same to your Supervising Director by April 12, 1979.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

(Please place a check (✓) in the appropriate blank to show your response. Only one check per numbered item please.)

1. My assignment at SCC is:

_____ Full-time _____ Pro-rated Full-time _____ Part-time Hourly

2. My college work experience has been:

_____ Only under the quarter system

_____ Under both the quarter and semester systems

3. My work assignment is primarily in:

_____ College Parallel

_____ Career Education

_____ Adult Education

_____ Support and/or Admin. Services

4. At this time, my personal preference of the term systems under consideration is the:

_____ Quarter System

_____ Semester System

_____ No Preference

5. In my opinion, an indepth study of the merits of each system as they relate to our situation should be undertaken as soon as same is feasible.

_____ Yes

_____ No

	Surveyed	86 Quarter System	Semester System	No Preference	Study Further Yes	No
<u>ARTS & SCIENCE</u>	5 1/3	5/6	4	1	4	1 1/2
Full-Time: Worked only Qtr.						
Worked Both	20	3	14	2 1/2	14 1/2	5
Prorate F/T: Worked only Qtr.	-					
Worked Both	2 1/2	1	1	1/2	1/2	2
Part-Time: Worked only Qtr.	-					
Worked Both	-					
Total Arts & Science	27 5/6	4 5/6	19	4	19	8 1/2
<u>ADULT EDUCATION</u>	1 5/6	1 1/2		1/3	5/6	
Full-Time: Worked only Qtr.						
Worked Both	5	5	2	3	5	
Prorate F/T: Worked only Qtr.						
Worked Both						
Part-Time: Worked Only Qtr.						
Worked Both						
Total Adult Education	6 5/6	1 1/2	2	3 1/3	5 5/6	
<u>CAREER EDUCATION</u>	13 5/6	5 1/2	1	7 1/3	8 5/6	
Full-Time: Worked only Qtr.						
Worked Both	9 5/6	5 1/3	2 1/2	1	5 1/2	3 1/3
Prorate F/T: Worked only Qtr.	1	1	1		1	
Worked Both	3 1/3	1	2	1/2	1 1/2	1
Part-Time: Worked only Qtr.						
Worked Both						
Total Career Education	28 1/6	12 5/6	5 1/2	8 5/6	16 5/6	7 1/3
<u>SUPPORT AND/OR ADMINISTRATIVE</u>	13 1/3	6 1/3	2	5 1/3	5 1/3	9 1/2
Full-Time: Worked only Qtr.						
Worked Both	10 5/6	4	5 1/2	1	4 1/3	1
Prorate F/T: Worked only Qtr.						
Worked Both						
Part-Time: Worked only Qtr.	1		1		1	
Worked Both						
Total Support and/or Administrative	25 1/6	10 1/3	8 1/2	6 1/3	10 2/3	10 1/2
ISP Full Time Qtrs.	10	5	1	4	4	6
<u>TOTALS</u>						
Both	2	2	0	0	2	0
TOTAL ISP	12	7	1	4	6	6
TOTALS	88	36 1/2	35	16 1/2	58 1/3	26 1/3

STUDENT REACTION REPORT FORM ON CONCEPTUAL CHANGE IN COLLEGE OPERATIONS

11-19-81

TO: Members of the Southeastern Community College Student Body

FROM: C. W. Callison, Superintendent

In order that we may get a reaction from the students of SCC on a conceptual change in college operations which is under consideration, may I ask that you please complete the following questionnaire and return same to the Registrar's Office within five calendar days.

Thanks for your input. It will be carefully considered in our decision-making process.

* * * * *

Please check one response to each of the following items.

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 1. I feel the total concept as presented would be beneficial to students, and plans for implementation in the fall of 1983 should continue. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 2. I favor lengthening class periods from 50 to 60 minutes and decreasing the number of days in the regular academic year from 180 to 150. (Disregard the quarter vs. semester issue in this response.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 3. I favor the semester system over the quarter system (Disregard the length of class periods and length of academic year in this response.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 4. I would be interested in participating in one or the other of the 3-week interim periods. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 5. I feel that the payment of tuition on a semester basis rather than a quarter basis would create serious problems for many students. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 6. I feel that the reduction in the number of available courses or the frequency of offering certain courses would create serious problems for students. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 7. I favor two registration periods per year over the present system of three registration periods. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 8. I feel that the concept as presented would reduce the earnings of working students during an academic year. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 9. I feel that a 60-minute class period is less conducive to the learning process than is a 50-minute class period. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 10. I feel the concept as presented would result in an excessive homework load for most students. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 11. I feel that the economic gains for students outweigh any disadvantages of the total concept. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 12. I feel that the concept, if adopted, would attract a greater number of students to SCC. |

PLEASE LIST ANY CONCERNS WHICH YOU HAVE WITH THE CONCEPT AS PRESENTED, WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN MADE KNOWN IN YOUR RESPONSES TO ITEMS 1 THROUGH 12 ABOVE.

13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____

Signature of Student

Program

Campus

Thanks for your input into this important issue !!

11-19-81

STUDENT REACTION REPORT FORM ON CONCEPTUAL CHANGE IN COLLEGE OPERATIONS

TO: Members of the Southeastern Community College Student Body (SOUTH CAMPUS)

FROM: C. W. Callison, Superintendent

In order that we may get a reaction from the students of SCC on a conceptual change in college operations which is under consideration, may I ask that you please complete the following questionnaire and return same to the Registrar's Office within five calendar days.

Thanks for your input. It will be carefully considered in our decision-making process.

Please check one response to each of the following items.

- 9 → Yes () No () Undecided 1. I feel the total concept as presented would be beneficial to students, and plans for implementation in the fall of 1983 should continue.
- 9 → Yes () No () Undecided 2. I favor lengthening class periods from 50 to 60 minutes and decreasing the number of days in the regular academic year from 180 to 150. (Disregard the quarter vs. semester issue in this response.)
- 9 → Yes () No () Undecided 3. I favor the semester system over the quarter system (Disregard the length of class periods and length of academic year in this response.)
- 1 → Yes 4 → No 4 → Undecided 4. I would be interested in participating in one or the other of the 3-week interim periods.
- 2 → Yes 5 → No 2 → Undecided 5. I feel that the payment of tuition on a semester basis rather than a quarter basis would create serious problems for many students.
- 6 → Yes 1 → No 2 → Undecided 6. I feel that the reduction in the number of available courses or the frequency of offering certain courses would create serious problems for students.
- 7 → Yes () No 2 → Undecided 7. I favor two registration periods per year over the present system of three registration periods.
- () Yes 4 → No 5 → Undecided 8. I feel that the concept as presented would reduce the earnings of working students during an academic year.
- () Yes 6 → No 3 → Undecided 9. I feel that a 60-minute class period is less conducive to the learning process than is a 50-minute class period.
- () Yes 9 → No () Undecided 10. I feel the concept as presented would result in an excessive homework load for most students.
- 6 → Yes () No 3 → Undecided 11. I feel that the economic gains for students outweigh any disadvantages of the total concept.
- 8 → Yes () No 1 → Undecided 12. I feel that the concept, if adopted, would attract a greater number of students to SCC.

PLEASE LIST ANY CONCERNS WHICH YOU HAVE WITH THE CONCEPT AS PRESENTED, WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN MADE KNOWN IN YOUR RESPONSES TO ITEMS 1 THROUGH 12 ABOVE.

- * Winter break is too long, interest could be lost if student doesn't take advantage of courses offered at that time.
- * The three-week interim period which falls after Christmas vacation would create an excessively long break --- skills might be forgotten.
- * Extended vacation time in January is excessive --- reduction in number of courses --- three weeks in spring is definite advantage to job seekers --- longer summer session with wide variety of classes should be implemented.

STUDENT REACTION REPORT FORM ON CONCEPTUAL CHANGE IN COLLEGE OPERATIONS

TO: Members of the Southeastern Community College Student Body

(NORTH CAMPUS)

FROM: C. W. Callison, Superintendent

In order that we may get a reaction from the students of SCC on a conceptual change in college operations which is under consideration, may I ask that you please complete the following questionnaire and return same to the Registrar's Office within five calendar days.

Thanks for your input. It will be carefully considered in our decision-making process.

.....
Please check one response to each of the following items.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 7- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes 1- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No 1- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 1. I feel the total concept as presented would be beneficial to students, and plans for implementation in the fall of 1983 should continue. |
| 4- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes 2- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No 3- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 2. I favor lengthening class periods from 50 to 60 minutes and decreasing the number of days in the regular academic year from 180 to 150. (Disregard the quarter vs. semester issue in this response.) |
| 8- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes () No 1- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 3. I favor the semester system over the quarter system (Disregard the length of class periods and length of academic year in this response.) |
| 2- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes 3- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No 4- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 4. I would be interested in participating in one or the other of the 3-week interim periods. |
| 2- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes 4- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No 3- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 5. I feel that the payment of tuition on a semester basis rather than a quarter basis would create serious problems for many students. |
| 2- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes 5- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No 2- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 6. I feel that the reduction in the number of available courses or the frequency of offering certain courses would create serious problems for students. |
| 7- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes () No 2- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 7. I favor two registration periods per year over the present system of three registration periods. |
| 4- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes 1- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No 4- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 8. I feel that the concept as presented would reduce the earnings of working students during an academic year. |
| 2- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes 3- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No 4- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 9. I feel that a 60-minute class period is less conducive to the learning process than is a 50-minute class period. |
| 3- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes 5- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No 1- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 10. I feel the concept as presented would result in an excessive homework load for most students. |
| 3- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes 3- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No 3- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 11. I feel that the economic gains for students outweigh any disadvantages of the total concept. |
| 3- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes 1- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No 5- <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undecided | 12. I feel that the concept, if adopted, would attract a greater number of students to SCC. |

PLEASE LIST ANY CONCERNS WHICH YOU HAVE WITH THE CONCEPT AS PRESENTED, WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN MADE KNOWN IN YOUR RESPONSES TO ITEMS 1 THROUGH 12 ABOVE.

13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____

Signature of Student

Program

Campus

Limited choice of classes, will certain classes be lengthened, making college credit more transferrable, or will same number of minutes apply. The idea of students getting jobs in January is totally ridiculous.

Course load for Mech. Tech. may be in excess.

My use of undecided in the above is because the items above could be construed in any of several ways, some of which could be unfavorable to the student body and myself even though I will not be here. I have endeavored to answer the items as I would if I was a student under this system. I also favor putting this up to a total school vote even though it would be a pain.

Quarter to semester credit hour change within SCC, to consider second year students credit change more than fairly.

I do not like the three week break in January. I do feel that this semester program should be pursued further.

My concern would be for the working students with a longer day, what about leaving length of class hour and day as is but lengthen the semester?

I feel that a six-week break in January is too long. This is not a good time to get a job. In fact, most employers lay off their Christmas help at this time. This extended break could also create problems for students who earn their money through a work-study program or Voc.-Rehab. I am also concerned that other institutions will not automatically accept SCC semester hours transferred toward a higher degree.

There would be a decrease in the variety of classes offered in each subject. Time schedules could be more confusing since classes would not meet on the half-hour, but different times each class.

APPENDIX D: FINAL SURVEY INSTRUMENT

We are interested in

what you think

QUARTER

SIXTH

- 1 -

We would like your opinion about the academic environment here at the community college during the current academic year. There are no right or wrong answers. To insure confidentiality, please do not put your name on the questionnaire.

Strongly Agree.....5
 Agree.....4
 Neither Agree or Disagree.....3
 Disagree.....2
 Strongly Disagree.....1

Section 1

Please circle your response

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Overall, I am glad the community college is switching to the semester system . . . | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. My learning experience is too fragmented. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. The faculty encourages students to perform up to their capabilities | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Class discussions are usually vigorous and intense | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. Courses at the college stress the abstract more than the concrete | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. I have developed strong communication skills. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. Students do a lot of last minute cramming. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. I have a strong desire to learn | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. The information provided by my counselor is accurate | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

- 2 -

10. I am behind in my assignments throughout most of the term	5	4	3	2	1
11. Group projects are encouraged in my classes	5	4	3	2	1
12. My classes are taught so that I can learn at my own pace.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I do most of my studying on the college campus.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I feel a high degree of academic pressure during a typical term.	5	4	3	2	1
15. The quality of laboratory equipment is good	5	4	3	2	1
16. Most of my classes are boring	5	4	3	2	1
17. The college curriculum has broadened my view of the world	5	4	3	2	1
18. Course goals are clearly explained. . . .	5	4	3	2	1
19. I study very little over weekends	5	4	3	2	1
20. There is a sufficient number of places on campus to study	5	4	3	2	1
21. The quality of instruction at the college is excellent.	5	4	3	2	1
22. Tutoring is available to students at a reasonable cost	5	4	3	2	1
23. Too many tests are given in my courses	5	4	3	2	1

- 3 -

24. Courses provide an intellectual challenge	5	4	3	2	1
25. Much reading is expected in my courses	5	4	3	2	1
26. Most courses at the college require extensive out-of-class preparation. . . .	5	4	3	2	1
27. It is easy to pass most courses at the college	5	4	3	2	1
28. I like the current learning environment at the college	5	4	3	2	1
29. Theatre, music, and the arts are important components at the college . . .	5	4	3	2	1
30. Instructors get to know students in their classes quite well.	5	4	3	2	1
31. I feel free to discuss exam scores with my instructor.	5	4	3	2	1
32. Faculty members are sensitive to students' needs	5	4	3	2	1
33. I socialize a lot with my friends	5	4	3	2	1
34. In developing campus policies, student opinion counts.	5	4	3	2	1
35. It's easy to meet people here at the college	5	4	3	2	1
36. Students frequently engage in bull sessions on campus.	5	4	3	2	1

- 4 -

37. It is easy to get a group together for card games, attending a movie, and similar activities.	5	4	3	2	1
38. Intramural events generate a lot of student enthusiasm and support.	5	4	3	2	1
39. There are many opportunities to get involved in clubs and organizations . . .	5	4	3	2	1
40. I am glad that I came to this college . .	5	4	3	2	1
41. Students have an opportunity to volunteer their time for community service projects.	5	4	3	2	1
42. There are many opportunities to attend cultural events	5	4	3	2	1
43. If you ask, most instructors will go out of their way to help you.	5	4	3	2	1
44. Students have the opportunity to develop intimate personal relationships	5	4	3	2	1
45. Students know where to go when they have problems	5	4	3	2	1
46. There is an extensive program of intramural sports	5	4	3	2	1
47. Social activities usually involve the use of alcoholic beverages.	5	4	3	2	1
48. Students seek advice from one another . .	5	4	3	2	1
49. The counselors show a personal interest .	5	4	3	2	1

- 5 -

50. Students' problems are promptly resolved. 5 4 3 2 1
51. Adequate recreational facilities on campus are available for student use. . . 5 4 3 2 1
52. Student elections are of great concern to students. 5 4 3 2 1
53. My contact with most administrators has been helpful. 5 4 3 2 1

Section 2

This college will be changing from the quarter system to the semester system in the fall of 1983. We would like to know how you think the two systems might compare. Use the following response categories.

Strongly Agree.....5
 Agree.....4
 Neither Agree or Disagree.....3
 Disagree.....2
 Strongly Disagree.....1

Under the quarter system . . .

Please circle your response

54. Students tend to get better grades. . . . 5 4 3 2 1
55. Students have to take too many courses during a quarter. 5 4 3 2 1
56. Students graduate sooner. 5 4 3 2 1
57. Students have more time to get into the subject matter. 5 4 3 2 1
58. Students are more likely to drop courses. 5 4 3 2 1

- 6 -

59. Students get to know their classmates better.	5	4	3	2	1
60. It is easier to change from one major to another.	5	4	3	2	1
61. Final exams cover more content.	5	4	3	2	1
62. There is a more leisurely learning pace.	5	4	3	2	1
63. There is a better use of textbooks.	5	4	3	2	1
64. There are fewer deadlines	5	4	3	2	1
65. The spacing of exams is better.	5	4	3	2	1
66. There is more course variety.	5	4	3	2	1
67. Too much information is crammed into each course	5	4	3	2	1
Under the semester system . . .					
68. Instructors will have more time to prepare for their classes	5	4	3	2	1
69. Laboratory facilities will be less crowded	5	4	3	2	1
70. There will be more time to assimilate classroom material.	5	4	3	2	1
71. Registration will be less hassle.	5	4	3	2	1
72. Class sizes will increase	5	4	3	2	1
73. The quality of advising will be improved.	5	4	3	2	1

- 7 -

74. There will be a more leisurely learning pace	5	4	3	2	1
75. Students will be better able to get into the classes they need.	5	4	3	2	1
76. The total cost of a year's books and supplies will go down	5	4	3	2	1
77. The homework load will increase	5	4	3	2	1
78. My cumulative grade point will not go down	5	4	3	2	1
79. My counselor will be more available for consultation.	5	4	3	2	1

Section 3

For the following items, please record the number of times you have engaged in the following activities during the current school year.

80. Sat down and talked with my advisor _____ times
81. Talked with instructors after class _____ times
82. Not received a course I requested _____ times
83. Had a good conversation with students of a different ethnic background _____ times
84. Attended cultural events _____ times

- 8 -

Section 4

Please answer the following questions about yourself by filling in the information or by circling the letter of the appropriate category.

85. What is your age?

_____ Years

86. What is your sex?

- a) Male
- b) Female

87. What is your classification?

- a) Freshman (less than 48 qtr. hrs.)
- b) Sophomore (more than 48 qtr. hrs.)

88. Are you:

- a) Full time (registered for 12 qtr. hrs.)
- b) Part time (registered for 11 qtr. hrs. or less)
- c) Other

89. What is your program? _____

90. How many days a week do you attend classes? _____

91. Where do you live?

- a) Rent an apartment, house
- b) Own home
- c) Live with parents
- d) Other

- 9 -

92. What is your current marital status?

- a) Single
- b) Married

93. What is your cumulative grade point average?

- a) Below 2.00
- b) 2.00 - 2.49
- c) 2.50 - 2.99
- d) 3.00 - 3.49
- e) 3.50 - 4.00
- f) I don't know

94. Do you work during the quarter?

- a) No
- b) Yes

If yes, how many hours per week do you work? _____ hours

95. How many student activities have you participated in during this current academic year?

96. Have you ever attended a community college, college or university which was on the semester system?

- a) Yes
- b) No

97. Are you planning to transfer to another college/university when you complete your education here?

- a) Yes
- b) No

- 10 -

98. In a typical week, how many hours do you

a) study . . . _____ hours

b) party . . . _____ hours

99. If you have any comments about changing from the quarter system to the semester system, how it might affect you, your lifestyle, work, etc., please feel free to share.

APPENDIX E: LETTER TO FACULTY

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: March 29, 1983

TO: Marian Carew, Virginia Wedemeyer, Jack Mastrofski,
Bob Young, Chris Burger, Dean Henry, Bruce Hann,
Maggie McCarey-Laird, Bill Berge, Mary Beth Wilk,
Madeline Kelly, Henry Prager

FROM: Lyla Maynard, Group Chairperson,
Developmental Disabilities and Child Development

RE: Student Questionnaire/Ph D Research
Quarter to Semester Transition

This is just a short memo to thank you in advance for your cooperation with regard to the student questionnaire. It is because of people like you that make education a delightful profession.

Your class was randomly selected by Ron McClurg so as to assure an equal distribution of student across the DMACC campus.

I would ask that you distribute the questionnaire at the end of the class period (preferably the last 10 minutes) sometime during the week of April 18 through April 22. I will have identified which class is to be tested on the outside of the envelope that contains the questionnaire.

Please have the student mark on the outside of the questionnaire which campus they are attending currently.

Ask the student to complete the questionnaire to the best of their ability and hand the questionnaire back to you.

Please then put the questionnaire into the envelope provided, and send through the campus mail to Ron McClurg, Research, Bldg. 1, Ankeny Campus.

If you have any questions, please call me at ext. 303.

bc

DES MOINES AREA



COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ANKENY CAMPUS
2006 S. Ankeny Blvd.
Ankeny, Iowa 50021
(515) 964-6200

BOONE CAMPUS
1125 Hancock Drive
Boone, Iowa 50036
(515) 432-7203

URBAN CAMPUS
1100 7th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50314
(515) 244-4226

**WESTERN
ATTENDANCE
CENTER**
229 N. Main Street
Carroll, Iowa 51401
(712) 792-1755

APPENDIX F: LETTER TO STUDENTS

DES MOINES AREA



Spring, 1983

ANKENY CAMPUS
2006 S. Ankeny Blvd.
Ankeny, Iowa 50021
(515) 964-6200

BOONE CAMPUS
1125 Hancock Drive
Boone, Iowa 50036
(515) 432-7203

URBAN CAMPUS
1100 7th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50314
(515) 244-4226

**WESTERN
ATTENDANCE
CENTER**
229 N. Main Street
Carroll, Iowa 51401
(712) 792-1755

Dear Student:

The change from the quarter system to the semester system is affecting many people on campus. The college is interested in what you think about the transition to the semester system and what you think about the learning environment under the quarter system.

You were selected in a random sample of Des Moines Area Community College students. Enclosed is the questionnaire which we would like you to complete. It is important that you complete the questionnaire. Your voluntary cooperation will help make the results useful in improving the transition to the semester system.

You may be assured of complete confidentiality. Please do not put your name on the questionnaire. In order for us to keep complete records, put a check mark in front of the campus where you are enrolled.

When you have completed the questionnaire leave it with the classroom instructor and they will forward them to us.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Lyla S. Maynard

Spring, 1983

Dear Student:

The change from the quarter system to the semester system is affecting many people on campus. The college is interested in what you think about the transition to the semester system and what you think about the learning environment under the quarter system.

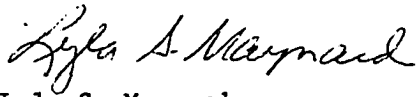
You were selected in a random sample of Southeastern Community College students. Enclosed is the questionnaire which we would like you to complete. It is important that you complete the questionnaire. Your voluntary cooperation will help make the results useful in improving the transition to the semester system.

You may be assured of complete confidentiality. Please do not put your name on the questionnaire. In order for us to keep complete records, put a check mark in front of the campus where you are enrolled.

When you have completed the questionnaire leave it with the classroom instructor and they will forward them to us.

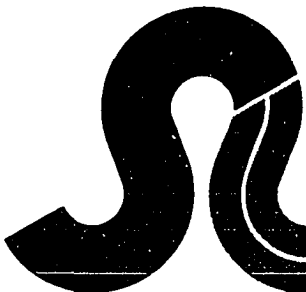
We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Lyla S. Maynard

bsc



North Campus - Southeastern Community College
Highway 406 and Gear Avenue
Drawer F, West Burlington, Iowa 52655

Telephone
319-752-2731

APPENDIX G: ITEM FREQUENCIES

We would like your opinion about the academic environment here at the community college during the current academic year. There are no right or wrong answers. To insure confidentiality, please do not put your name on the questionnaire.

Strongly Agree.....5
 Agree.....4
 Neither Agree or Disagree.....3
 Disagree.....2
 Strongly Disagree.....1

PERCENTAGES

<u>Section 1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
1. Overall, I am glad the community college is switching to the semester system.	23.9	22.8	32.8	13.3	7.1
2. My learning experience is too fragmented.	4.9	13.7	43.7	27.7	10.0
3. The faculty encourages students to perform up to their capabilities.	27.3	48.3	16.0	7.5	0.9
4. Class discussions are usually vigorous and intense.	7.5	31.9	37.7	19.5	3.3
5. Courses at the college stress the abstract more than the concrete.	2.2	16.4	53.2	24.4	3.8
6. I have developed strong communication skills.	11.8	40.6	32.8	11.8	3.1
7. Students do a lot of last minute cramming.	30.4	41.9	18.8	6.4	2.4
8. I have a strong desire to learn.	43.0	44.6	11.5	0.7	0.2
9. The information provided by my counselor is accurate.	15.3	42.8	30.2	7.1	4.7
10. I am behind in my assignments throughout most of the term.	4.2	17.1	16.0	39.0	23.7
11. Group projects are encouraged in my classes.	6.0	24.6	35.3	25.3	8.9
12. My classes are taught so that I can learn at my own pace.	6.2	17.7	24.4	39.5	12.2

PERCENTAGES

	5	4	3	2	1
13. I do most of my studying on the college campus.	4.4	15.7	13.1	40.6	26.2
14. I feel a high degree of academic pressure during a typical term.	10.9	30.8	36.4	16.9	5.1
15. The quality of laboratory equipment is good.	12.2	32.8	43.5	7.3	4.2
16. Most of my classes are boring.	3.8	10.0	31.5	40.6	14.2
17. The college curriculum has broadened my view of the world.	15.5	41.5	29.5	9.5	4.0
18. Course goals are clearly explained.	15.1	51.7	20.4	10.2	2.7
19. I study very little over weekends.	16.4	24.2	16.0	27.3	16.2
20. There is a sufficient number of places on campus to study.	10.0	43.0	22.2	16.2	8.6
21. The quality of instruction at the college is excellent.	13.3	42.4	33.0	9.1	2.2
22. Tutoring is available to students at a reasonable cost.	8.2	21.5	56.5	8.2	5.5
23. Too many tests are given in my courses.	5.8	10.4	39.5	37.0	7.3
24. Courses provide an intellectual challenge.	14.2	58.5	21.1	4.9	1.3
25. Much reading is expected in my courses.	22.8	43.5	19.3	12.0	2.4
26. Most courses at the college require extensive out-of-class preparation.	14.9	35.3	29.0	18.8	2.0
27. It is easy to pass most courses at the college.	8.4	30.2	35.3	21.3	4.9
28. I like the current learning environment at the college.	10.2	54.3	24.6	8.4	2.4
29. Theatre, music, and the arts are important components at the college.	4.9	17.7	40.8	24.4	12.2

PERCENTAGES

	5	4	3	2	1
30. Instructors get to know students in their classes quite well.	25.1	47.5	16.9	8.9	1.8
31. I feel free to discuss exam scores with my instructor.	22.6	48.6	16.0	10.6	2.2
32. Faculty members are sensitive to students' needs.	10.2	41.2	32.4	12.4	3.8
33. I socialize a lot with my friends.	24.8	37.3	23.5	11.8	2.7
34. In developing campus policies, student opinion counts.	12.9	26.6	42.1	11.5	6.9
35. It's easy to meet people here at the college.	16.0	50.1	19.5	11.1	3.3
36. Students frequently engage in bull sessions on campus.	20.2	34.4	35.3	8.4	1.8
37. It is easy to get a group together for card games, attending a movie, and similar activities.	9.5	25.9	42.1	17.7	4.7
38. Intramural events generate a lot of student enthusiasm and support.	4.0	18.0	47.9	21.1	9.1
39. There are many opportunities to get involved in clubs and organizations.	3.3	29.3	39.2	21.5	6.7
40. I am glad that I came to this college.	28.6	45.9	19.1	3.8	2.7
41. Students have an opportunity to volunteer their time for community service projects.	3.5	22.0	55.9	15.1	3.5
42. There are many opportunities to attend cultural events.	2.2	18.2	47.9	22.6	9.1
43. If you ask, most instructors will go out of their way to help you.	19.7	47.9	21.5	8.2	2.7
44. Students have the opportunity to develop intimate personal relationships.	10.6	39.0	37.9	9.5	2.9
45. Students know where to go when they have problems.	7.1	38.4	32.6	18.8	3.1

		PERCENTAGES				
		5	4	3	2	1
46.	There is an extensive program of intramural sports.	1.6	22.0	47.2	17.5	11.8
47.	Social activities usually involve the use of alcoholic beverages.	17.1	29.9	35.9	11.5	5.5
48.	Students seek advice from one another.	20.2	60.8	17.1	1.6	0.4
49.	The counselors show a personal interest.	7.3	35.9	33.3	14.0	9.5
50.	Students' problems are promptly resolved.	1.3	17.7	55.4	19.3	6.2
51.	Adequate recreational facilities on campus are available for student use.	6.0	32.4	35.3	17.1	9.3
52.	Student elections are of great concern to students.	2.0	6.9	35.7	35.9	19.5
53.	My contact with most administrators has been helpful.	8.4	42.1	32.4	11.1	6.0

Section 2

This college will be changing from the quarter system to the semester system in the fall of 1983. We would like to know how you think the two systems might compare. Use the following response categories.

Strongly Agree.....5
 Agree.....4
 Neither Agree or Disagree.....3
 Disagree.....2
 Strongly Disagree.....1

		PERCENTAGES				
		5	4	3	2	1
<u>Under the quarter system . . .</u>						
54.	Students tend to get better grades.	9.1	31.0	47.9	9.8	2.2
55.	Students have to take too many courses during a quarter.	7.1	24.8	34.8	27.1	6.2
56.	Students graduate sooner.	5.1	21.1	45.7	22.4	5.8

PERCENTAGES

	5	4	3	2	1
57. Students have more time to get into the subject matter.	5.8	18.8	29.7	36.4	9.3
58. Students are more likely to drop courses.	9.8	34.6	30.8	20.4	4.4
59. Students get to know their classmates better.	6.0	24.4	41.5	24.8	3.3
60. It is easier to change from one major to another.	7.8	39.9	44.1	6.0	2.2
61. Final exams cover more content.	7.5	20.4	33.5	34.1	4.4
62. There is a more leisurely learning pace.	4.4	18.2	33.9	33.5	10.0
63. There is a better use of textbooks.	4.4	15.5	41.0	31.0	8.0
64. There are fewer deadlines.	2.2	12.2	33.9	40.6	11.1
65. The spacing of exams is better.	4.7	22.2	36.4	28.6	8.2
66. There is more course variety.	13.1	36.1	32.8	13.5	4.4
67. Too much information is crammed into each course.	17.5	31.0	27.3	18.0	6.2
<u>Under the semester system . . .</u>					
68. Instructors will have more time to prepare for their classes.	12.9	45.2	29.5	8.9	3.5
69. Laboratory facilities will be less crowded.	6.2	22.2	50.6	16.2	4.9
70. There will be more time to assimilate classroom material.	10.2	47.0	32.4	7.1	3.3
71. Registration will be less hassle.	11.1	38.4	33.3	13.3	4.0
72. Class sizes will increase.	10.9	42.4	37.5	7.3	2.0
73. The quality of advising will be improved.	4.2	17.3	58.8	15.7	4.0
74. There will be a more leisurely learning pace.	10.6	39.0	33.3	13.5	3.5

		PERCENTAGES				
		5	4	3	2	1
75.	Students will be better able to get into the classes they need.	5.1	23.7	43.7	22.2	5.1
76.	The total cost of a year's books and supplies will go down.	10.9	32.4	27.7	18.8	10.2
77.	The homework load will increase.	8.4	26.2	46.1	17.5	1.8
78.	My cumulative grade point will not go down.	5.5	23.3	54.3	11.8	5.1
79.	My counselor will be more available for consultation.	3.8	17.5	59.9	13.1	5.8

Section 3

For the following items, please record the number of times you have engaged in the following activities during the current school year.

		No	1-5	6-10	11 or more	N=
		Response	Times	Times	Times	
80.	Sat down and talked with my advisor	26.4	58.2	10.5	4.8	451
81.	Talked with instructors after class	6.2	39.5	23.3	30.8	451
82.	Not received a course I requested	78.9	19.9	1.0	0.0	451
83.	Had a good conversation with students of a different ethnic background	42.4	31.3	12.2	14.0	451
84.	Attended cultural events	76.5	20.3	2.4	0.6	451

Section 4

Please answer the following questions about yourself by filling in the information or by circling the letter of the appropriate category.

85. What is your age? 18-22 years 71.7% N=323
 23-27 years 12.4% N= 56
 28-50 years 15.6% N= 71

86. What is your sex?

Male 44.3% N=200
 Female 55.7% N=251

87. What is your classification?

Freshman (less than 48 qtr. hrs.) 64.7% N=292
 Sophomore (more than 48 qtr. hrs.) 35.3% N=159

88. Are you:

Full time (registered for 12 qtr. hrs.) 88.2% N=398
 Part time (registered for 11 qtr. hrs. or less) 11.5% N= 52
 Other 0.2% N= 1

89. What is your program?

Business Mgt. 34.1% N=154
 Industry and Technology 14.9% N= 67
 Health and Science 13.1% N= 59
 Public Services 28.8% N=130
 Can't Assign 3.3% N= 15
 No Response 5.8% N= 26

90. How many days a week do you attend classes?

1 0.7% N= 3
 2 4.4% N= 20
 3 10.4% N= 47
 4 9.3% N= 42
 5 74.5% N=336
 6 0.7% N= 3

91. Where do you live?

Rent an apartment, house	33.9%	N=153
Own home	16.0%	N= 72
Live with parents	46.3%	N=209
Other	3.8%	N= 17

92. What is your current marital status?

Single	83.6%	N=377
Married	16.4%	N= 74

93. What is your cumulative grade point average?

Below 2.00	1.6%	N= 7
2.00 - 2.49	11.3%	N= 51
2.50 - 2.99	24.4%	N=110
3.00 - 3.49	31.3%	N=141
3.50 - 4.00	21.1%	N= 95
I don't know	10.4%	N= 47

94. Do you work during the quarter?

No 37.3% N=168

Yes 62.7% N=283

If yes, how many hours per week do you work? $\bar{X} = 23.66$ hours

95. How many student activities have you participated in during this current academic year?

$\bar{X} = 3.09$

96. Have you ever attended a community college, college or university which was on the semester system?

Yes 16.0% N= 72

No 84.0% N=379

97. Are you planning to transfer to another college/university when you complete your education here?

Yes 46.6% N=210

No 53.4% N=241

98. In a typical week, how many hours do you

study $\bar{X} = 13.39$ hours

party $\bar{X} = 9.99$ hours

99. If you have any comments about changing from the quarter system to the semester system, how it might affect you, your lifestyle, work, etc., please feel free to share.